

TWENTY-FOUR PRELUDES

for solo piano

JOHN BURGE



Given the number of precedents in the world of Classical music, it is fair to state that there is a long tradition of composing a set of **Twenty-Four Preludes** for solo piano. John Burge's preludes draw their primary influence from Chopin's Opus 28 set in that Burge also composes one prelude in each major and minor key, employing the exact same ordering of keys used by Chopin. Beginning with the first two preludes in C major and A minor (the major and minor keys sharing the same key signature) the pattern of keys repeats by ascending Perfect Fifths (Numbers 3 and 4 are in G major and E minor) until reaching the final pair of preludes in F major and D minor. While Chopin was writing music in the highly chromaticized harmonic language of the early 19th century, in 2015, the year that Burge completed his set, the concept of tonality has undergone so many developments since Chopin's time that there are now whole schools of musical techniques that produce music that is quite atonal. As an all-governing principle for his set of preludes though, Burge made it a personal requirement that each prelude had to embrace its tonic key in a decisively audible fashion.

It will be apparent to anyone playing or listening to Burge's preludes that the ones in minor keys are often the most vividly dramatic. Indeed, numbers 6, 12, 18 and 24 are sufficiently expansive that they generate a strong sense of ending which structurally groups the entire work into four blocks of six prelude subsets. It will also be obvious that the higher numbered preludes are generally more technically difficult and longer. The other way that the preludes can be divided is discernable in the arrangement of the eight preludes that use non-traditional piano performance techniques. Numbers 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20 and 23 involve such things as creating bell-like harmonics, strumming strings inside the piano, knocking on the wooden frame and plucking strings. Although the means by which sound is activated in these specific preludes might be somewhat novel, harmonically these preludes are often the most emphatically tonal music of the entire work.

This composition is dedicated to Canadian pianist, Mathew Walton. John Burge had the pleasure of adjudicating Mathew in piano performance competitions in Ontario early in his career and Mathew eventually tracked down some of John Burge's music while studying at the University of Ottawa and then the University of Alberta. A fabulous pianist, Mathew not only performed John Burge's **Prelude Variations**, for piano and orchestra, with the University of Alberta Symphony Orchestra (a work based on Chopin's Prelude in C minor, Op. 28, No. 20), but he also made a comprehensive study of the first nine installments of Burge's **Studies for Poetry** series. Around this time, Mathew also gave John Burge a translation of Czeslaw Milosz's book of poetry entitled, **Bells in Winter**. Although John had already finished composing Prelude No. 2 in A minor when he received this poetry collection, he found that this title seemed so appropriate for the second prelude's bell-like harmonics that he immediately subtitled the second prelude, "Bells in Winter." Eventually subtitles were added to fourteen of the preludes, in part to help the listener stay more engaged while trying to follow a performance of the complete set.

No. 1 in C Major — The first prelude is based on a simple pattern of gently rocking sixteenth-note chords in the right hand while a slowly moving melody is projected with the thumb of the left hand. The music should not be hurried as this prelude is really the springboard from which everything flows.

No. 2 in A Minor [Bells in Winter] — The subtitle is borrowed from a book of poetry by Czeslaw Milosz and aptly describes both the bell-like harmonic created by activating a node on the lowest string of the piano and the sharply attacked chords at the high end of the keyboard.

No. 3 in G Major [Playground Games] — There is a kind of "racing around the merry-go-round" flavour to this music that demands great velocity. The very simple diatonic motive that makes up the theme sounds a bit like the bantering of a child's taunt in its spunkiness.

No. 4 in E Minor — The main building block of this prelude is a descending chromatic scale played in steady note values that works somewhat aggressively against a double-dotted melodic fragment that is more angular in the way it utilizes leaps of Perfect Fifths.

No. 5 in D Major [Linear Reverberations] — Throughout this prelude the left hand holds down a low-note cluster that generates overtones (sympathetic reverberations) to the right hand passages. The linear aspect of the music

can be heard in the scalar design of the sustained pitches.

No. 6 in B Minor [Off-beat Waltz] — The use of cross rhythms and syncopated accents gives the music a slightly demonic quality.

No. 7 in A Major — The five-note figure created by expanding a single pitch with its upper and lower neighbour note is one of the most expressive gestures in all of Western Art Music. The underlying building block of this prelude is the chain-like way that this neighbour-note figure is used in the left hand while the right sustains more melodic material. The middle portion of this short prelude requires a fluid sense of rhythmic freedom between hands as the right hand plays triplets while the left hand maintains the quintuple groupings with which the prelude began.

No. 8 in F Sharp Minor — This prelude is perhaps the most minimalistic composition ever written by John Burge in that the work is built entirely around the bass line's repetition of the tonic and dominant pitches while the top voice simply ascends by diatonic steps using a broken-chord pattern. The three-part texture is completed by the addition of a middle voice that simply repeats a four-note motive in whole notes. The music ends with the lower voice's tonic and dominant pattern reactivated by using a stopped string technique inside the piano (an effect that sounds very much like a cello pizzicato).

Twenty-four Preludes

for Solo Piano

No. 1 - C Major

Moderato semplice ♩ = 144

John Burge

mp dolce

molto pedale

2

3

4

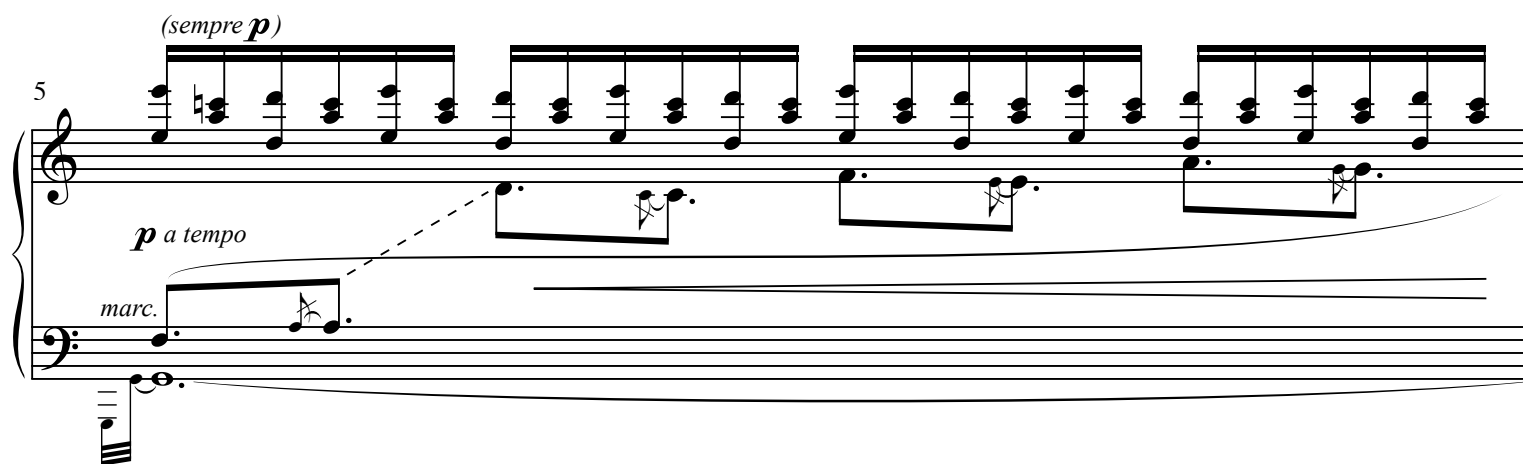
rall. *mf*

(sempre *p*)

5

p a tempo

marc.



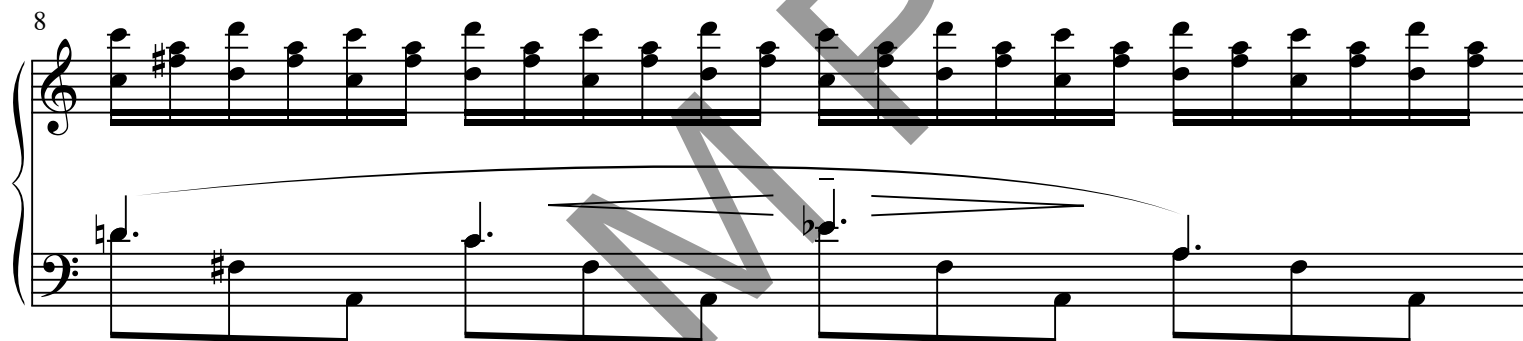
6

mf

p poco agitato

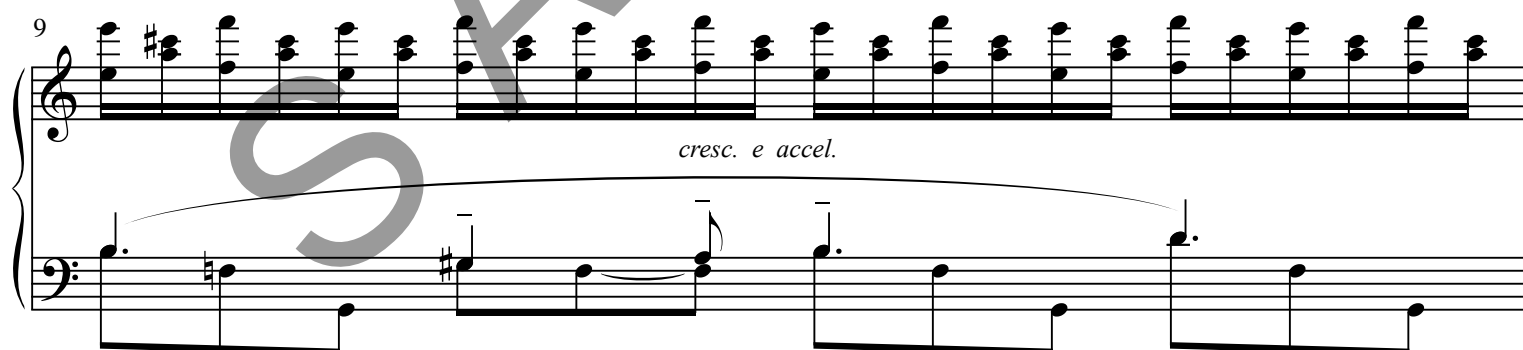


8



9

cresc. e accel.



10



12

mf a tempo poco rit.

13

mp a tempo *poco rit.*

14

p a tempo

marc.

poco cresc.

This system contains the first 14 measures of the piece. The treble staff features a melody of eighth notes, while the bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with dotted rhythms. A large, faint 'S' watermark is visible across the center of the page.

15

mp

p

acc. (no cresc.)

17

18

19

20

21

mp *p* *rit.* *(no cresc.)* *(p)* *mp* *Red.*

The musical score consists of five systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clef).
System 1 (measures 17-18): The right hand plays a continuous eighth-note pattern. The left hand plays a descending eighth-note line.
System 2 (measures 19-20): The right hand continues the eighth-note pattern. The left hand continues the descending line. A 'rit.' marking is placed above the right hand in measure 19. A crescendo hairpin is shown in measure 20.
System 3 (measure 20): The right hand continues the eighth-note pattern. The left hand has a sustained bass line. A 'mp' marking is placed above the right hand, and a 'p' marking is placed above the left hand. A 'no cresc.' marking is placed above the right hand.
System 4 (measure 21): The right hand continues the eighth-note pattern. The left hand has a sustained bass line. A '(p)' marking is placed above the right hand, and a 'mp' marking is placed above the left hand. A 'Red.' marking is placed above the right hand.
System 5 (measures 21-22): The right hand continues the eighth-note pattern. The left hand has a sustained bass line. A 'mp' marking is placed above the right hand. The system ends with a final chordal resolution.

No. 2 - A Minor

[Bells in Winter]

Molto Largo ♩ = 40

f *f* (*molto marc.*) *ff*

8va-----

8vb-----

8vb (sustained throughout)

*While seated on the piano bench reach as far as you can inside the piano with the right hand, touching the low A string to create a node that produces a bell-like harmonic when the key is played with the left hand.

8va-----

10

fff *f*

8vb-----

[1' 15"]

No. 3 - G Major

[Playground Games]

Vivace ♩ = 88

mf *f* *sfz*

5 *2* *4* *1*

(sans pedale)

2

Measures 4-9 of the musical score for "L'Espresso" by Francesco Tronzo. The score is written for piano and features a variety of musical techniques:

- Measure 4:** Starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The right hand plays a series of chords, while the left hand plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. A *mf* dynamic is indicated below the left hand.
- Measure 5:** Continues the rhythmic pattern in the left hand. The right hand plays chords. A *mf* dynamic is indicated below the left hand.
- Measure 6:** The left hand plays a complex rhythmic pattern. The right hand plays chords. A *mf* dynamic is indicated below the left hand. The measure ends with a *Red.* (Reduction) and an asterisk.
- Measure 7:** The left hand plays a complex rhythmic pattern. The right hand plays chords. A *mf* dynamic is indicated below the left hand. The measure ends with a *Red.* (Reduction) and an asterisk.
- Measure 8:** The left hand plays a complex rhythmic pattern. The right hand plays chords. A *mf* dynamic is indicated below the left hand. The measure ends with a *Red.* (Reduction) and an asterisk.
- Measure 9:** The left hand plays a complex rhythmic pattern. The right hand plays chords. A *mf* dynamic is indicated below the left hand. The measure ends with a *Red.* (Reduction) and an asterisk.

11 *ff* *ped. (hold until bar 19)*

12 *cresc.*

13 *ffp* *molto cresc.*

14 *8va* *ff* *f dolce* (*← ped. →*)

17 *rit.* *a tempo* *mp* *mf (sans pedale)* *sfz* *p* *mp* *p*

20 *f* *mf* *ped.*

* [1' 15"]

No. 4 - E Minor

9

Largo ♩ = 76

ff (arp. - ad lib.) **p** **mp** **ff** **p** **mf** **p** **f** molto legato **più f** **ff**

(no pedal) Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * simile

9

cresc. poco a poco

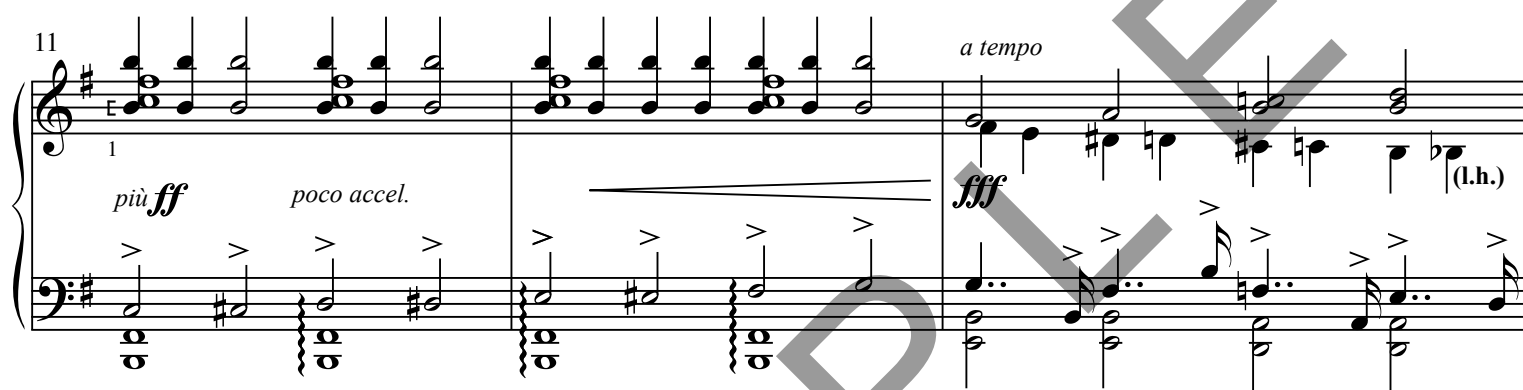


11

più ff poco accel.

a tempo

fff (l.h.)



14

(molto dim.)

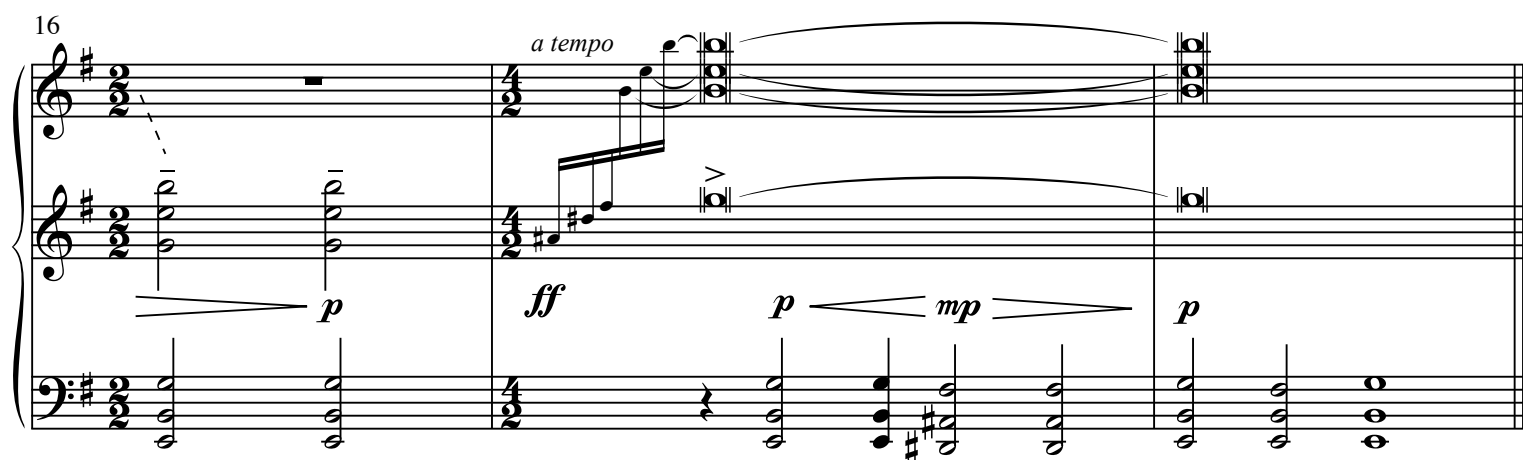
fff molto dim. e rit.



16

a tempo

p ff p mp p



No. 5 - D Major

[Linear Reverberations]

11

Lento ♩ = 40

p espr. *mp* *mf* *cresc.*

(without damper pedal)

*Silently depress as many white and black notes as possible in the range indicated and hold until the end. While it is also possible to use the sostenuto pedal to hold these silently-depressed pitches, it is preferable to play all notes on the top staff with just the right hand as the finger substitution shown by the fingering ensures a satisfying projection of the underlying scalar pattern. Use just a bit of damper pedal to connect the repeated notes in bars 1-2 and again at bar 15-16.

5 *simile*

f *dim.* *mp* *cresc.*

9

f *dim.* *mp* *cresc.*

13

mp *p* *cresc.*

(with damper pedal)

16

f *dim.* *mp* *cresc.*

[2' 00"]

No. 6 - B Minor

[Off-beat Waltz]

Allegro scherzando $\text{♩} = 60$

The musical score is written for piano and bass. The key signature is B minor (two sharps: F# and C#). The time signature is 3/4. The tempo and style are indicated as "Allegro scherzando" with a quarter note equal to 60 beats per minute ($\text{♩} = 60$).

The score is divided into five systems, each containing two staves (treble and bass). The measures are numbered 1 through 17.

Measure 1: Treble staff has a half note chord (F#4, C#5) with a *p* (no cresc.) dynamic and a *mf* dynamic. Bass staff has a half note chord (B2, F#3) with a *mf* dynamic.

Measure 2: Treble staff has a half note chord (F#4, C#5) with a *p* dynamic. Bass staff has a half note chord (B2, F#3) with a *mf* dynamic.

Measure 3: Treble staff has a half note chord (F#4, C#5) with a *p* dynamic. Bass staff has a half note chord (B2, F#3) with a *mf* dynamic.

Measure 4: Treble staff has a half note chord (F#4, C#5) with a *p* dynamic. Bass staff has a half note chord (B2, F#3) with a *mf* dynamic.

Measure 5: Treble staff has a half note chord (F#4, C#5) with a *p* dynamic. Bass staff has a half note chord (B2, F#3) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic.

Measure 6: Treble staff has a half note chord (F#4, C#5) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic. Bass staff has a half note chord (B2, F#3) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic.

Measure 7: Treble staff has a half note chord (F#4, C#5) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic. Bass staff has a half note chord (B2, F#3) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic.

Measure 8: Treble staff has a half note chord (F#4, C#5) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic. Bass staff has a half note chord (B2, F#3) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic.

Measure 9: Treble staff has a half note chord (F#4, C#5) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic. Bass staff has a half note chord (B2, F#3) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic.

Measure 10: Treble staff has a half note chord (F#4, C#5) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic. Bass staff has a half note chord (B2, F#3) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic.

Measure 11: Treble staff has a half note chord (F#4, C#5) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic. Bass staff has a half note chord (B2, F#3) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic.

Measure 12: Treble staff has a half note chord (F#4, C#5) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic. Bass staff has a half note chord (B2, F#3) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic.

Measure 13: Treble staff has a half note chord (F#4, C#5) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic. Bass staff has a half note chord (B2, F#3) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic.

Measure 14: Treble staff has a half note chord (F#4, C#5) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic. Bass staff has a half note chord (B2, F#3) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic.

Measure 15: Treble staff has a half note chord (F#4, C#5) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic. Bass staff has a half note chord (B2, F#3) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic.

Measure 16: Treble staff has a half note chord (F#4, C#5) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic. Bass staff has a half note chord (B2, F#3) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic.

Measure 17: Treble staff has a half note chord (F#4, C#5) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic. Bass staff has a half note chord (B2, F#3) with a *p* (sub.) dynamic.

The score includes various dynamics: *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *mp* (mezzo-piano), and *p* (sub.) (piano, sustained). It also includes articulations such as accents (>) and slurs. The piece concludes with a repeat sign and a fermata in the final measure.

21

mp *mf* *mp* *cresc.* *f*

*Led. ** *Led. **

26

mf (*no cresc.*) *f* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

*Led. ** *Led. ** *Led. ** *Led. **

30

p(sub.)

*Led. ** *Led. ** *Led. **

34

p(sub.) *p(sub.)* *p(sub.) cresc.*

*Led. ** *simile*

39

43

f *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *ff*

47

mp *mf* *mp* *p*(sub.) *cresc.*

Red. *

52

mf *dim.*

58

(,) *p* (no cresc.) *mf* *p* *mf*

63

p *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *cresc.*

68 *p* (sub.) *mp*

73 *p* (no cresc.) *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

77 *mp* *p* *mf* *ff*

82 (G.P.) *p* cresc.

88 *ff* *mf* *ff* (no rit.)

[1' 45"]

No. 7 - A Major

Adagietto ♩ = 42

3
p dolce *mp* *p* *mp*
 (pedal should not blur the 16th notes)

3
p *mp* *p* *cresc.*

5
mf *p (sempre)*

7
poco cresc. *molto rit.* *mp*

9
p a tempo *cresc.* *poco* *a poco*

11
mf *p* *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

No. 8 - F# Minor

17

Moderato ♩ = 96

p *mf*

And. (held throughout)

5 *p* (*sempre*) *f* *p*

9 *f* *p*

13 *f* *p*

17 *f* *p*

21

f

p

25

f

p

29

cresc.

f

p

cresc.

33

ff dim. (both hands)

37

a tempo

LH *rit.*

fp

ff

p

[2' 00"]

*If playing on an upright piano, just play the "x" notes as written. If playing a grand piano though, use two fingers of the right hand to finger dampen the strings of these same two notes very close to the keyboard such that when the notes are played by the left hand in the last four bars, the resultant sound is very much like the pizzicato (plucking) of a string instrument. Looking inside the piano, as the L.H. is still holding these same notes (C# and F#), the hammers should be slightly raised making it easy for the R.H. fingers to find the correct notes to finger dampen. Similarly, to find the low F# of the final bar, lightly touch this key with the L.H. 5th finger so that the pianist can observe the note's raised hammer and then use the R.H. thumb to finger dampen the correct note.

No. 9 - E Major

[The Singing Clock]

19

Allegro assai ♩ = 180*mp espr.*

p

(sans pedale)

5

9

13

17

*Red. **

*Red. **

simile

21

cresc. poco a poco

25

29

33

*Leg. * Leg. * simile*

37

mf mp mf

*Leg. * Leg. * simile*

40

mp mf mp cresc.

43

44

45

46

f

p (*sub.*)

49

f

p

mp

p

p

p

55

mp

59

mf

p

63

mp

p

67 *mf* *p* *mp* *p*

71 *(p)* *pp* *cresc. poco a poco* *Red. ** *simile*

75 *(p)*

79 *(mp)*

83 *(mf)* *Red. ** *Red. ** *Red. ** *Red. **

87 *fp* *cresc.* *Red.*

90 *ff* *8va* *8vb* *Leo.*

93

99

103 *mf* *p* *mp* *p*

107

111

The musical score is for a piano piece in A major (three sharps). It consists of six systems of staves, each with a treble and bass clef. The first system (measures 90-92) features a forte (*ff*) dynamic and includes an 8va (octave up) and 8vb (octave down) marking. The second system (measures 93-98) continues the melodic and harmonic development. The third system (measures 99-102) shows a change in texture. The fourth system (measures 103-106) includes dynamic markings of *mf*, *p*, *mp*, and *p*. The fifth system (measures 107-110) and the sixth system (measures 111-114) conclude the piece. A large, diagonal watermark 'SAMPLE' is overlaid across the center of the page.

No. 10 - C Sharp Minor

Adagio Maestoso ♩ = 48

The musical score is for a piece in C sharp minor, 4/4 time, with a tempo of Adagio Maestoso (♩ = 48). The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The score is divided into four systems, each containing a piano (right hand) and a bass (left hand) part.

Measure 1: The piano part begins with a half note F#4, followed by a quarter note G#4, a quarter note A4, and a half note B4. The bass part has a half note F#3. Dynamics: *mf* for the piano, *ff* for the bass.

Measure 2: The piano part has a quarter note G#4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a half note C#5. The bass part has a half note F#3. Dynamics: *mf* for the piano, *f* for the bass.

Measure 3: The piano part has a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C#5, and a half note D5. The bass part has a half note F#3. Dynamics: *mf* for the piano, *f* for the bass.

Measure 4: The piano part has a quarter note B4, a quarter note C#5, a quarter note D5, and a half note E5. The bass part has a half note F#3. Dynamics: *mf* for the piano, *f* for the bass.

Measure 5: The piano part has a quarter note C#5, a quarter note D5, a quarter note E5, and a half note F#5. The bass part has a half note F#3. Dynamics: *mf* for the piano, *f* for the bass.

Measure 6: The piano part has a quarter note D5, a quarter note E5, a quarter note F#5, and a half note G#5. The bass part has a half note F#3. Dynamics: *mf* for the piano, *f* for the bass.

Measure 7: The piano part has a quarter note E5, a quarter note F#5, a quarter note G#5, and a half note A5. The bass part has a half note F#3. Dynamics: *mf* for the piano, *f* for the bass.

Measure 8: The piano part has a quarter note F#5, a quarter note G#5, a quarter note A5, and a half note B5. The bass part has a half note F#3. Dynamics: *mf* for the piano, *f* for the bass.

Articulations and dynamics include accents (>), crescendos (*cresc. simile*), and dynamic markings (*mf*, *f*, *ff*). A pedal point is indicated by a double bar line with a circle and a cross, and a note: *pedale simile*.

9

11

13

15

(mf) *cresc. e rit.* *ff* *8va*

[1' 45"]

No. 11 - B Major

[The Autoharp]

Not rushed ♩ = 40

mp *mf* *mp* *mf* *mf* *f*

4 *mf* *f* *f* *mf* *mp* *mf*

rit.

[2' 00"]

*All notes in this Prelude are silently depressed with the left hand and activated by strumming the strings with the back of the finger nail(s) on the right hand. Once the chord is ringing, use the damper pedal to catch the ringing notes so that the left hand is free to silently shift to the notes of the next chord. The strumming motion can start with low notes and rise or with high notes and fall at the liberty of the performer. On some pianos there might be a cast iron bar in the way in which case the performer is free to rearrange the left hand notes as needed or have the right hand jump over the metal bar as smoothly as possible. It is worth pointing out that depending on the size of the performing space, the effect that the pianist hears might not sound that loud while seated at the piano but will sound louder to the audience due to the increased resonance heard coming off the lid of the piano. Asking a listener to gauge the effect in rehearsal is advisable. It is also possible to use a plectra or guitar pick for the strumming.

No. 12 - G# Minor

[Das Thema]

Allegro ♩ = 104

p

mp *p*

*Red. ** *Red. ** *Red. ** *Red. **

4 *mp* *p*

Red. ** Red. ** *Red. ** *Red. ** *Red. **

6

Measures 6-8 of the musical score. The piece is in E major (three sharps). Measure 6 has a repeat sign in both staves. Measure 7 begins with a crescendo hairpin and the dynamic *fp* (fortissimo piano). The right hand plays a continuous eighth-note melody, while the left hand plays a bass line with occasional triplets. Measure 8 features a *8va* (octave up) marking and a *f* (fortissimo) dynamic in the right hand, which plays accented eighth notes. The left hand continues with a bass line. A *Leo.* (leaving the orchestra) marking is present in the left hand.

9

Measures 9-10 of the musical score. Measure 9 continues the eighth-note melody in the right hand and the bass line in the left hand. Measure 10 features a crescendo hairpin and the dynamic *fp* (fortissimo piano). The right hand plays accented eighth notes, and the left hand plays a bass line. A *8va* (octave up) marking is present in the right hand. A *Leo.* (leaving the orchestra) marking is present in the left hand.

11

Measures 11-12 of the musical score. Measure 11 continues the eighth-note melody in the right hand and the bass line in the left hand. Measure 12 features a *f* (fortissimo) dynamic in the right hand, which plays accented eighth notes. The left hand plays a bass line. A *Leo.* (leaving the orchestra) marking is present in the left hand.

13

Measures 13-14 of the musical score. Measure 13 continues the eighth-note melody in the right hand and the bass line in the left hand. Measure 14 features a *secco* (secco) marking and a *p(sub.)* (piano subito) dynamic in the right hand, which plays accented eighth notes. The left hand plays a bass line. A *cresc.* (crescendo) marking is present in the left hand. A *Leo.* (leaving the orchestra) marking is present in the left hand.

15

Measures 15-16 of the musical score. Measure 15 has a repeat sign in both staves. Measure 16 begins with a crescendo hairpin and the dynamic *mp* (mezzo-piano). The right hand plays a continuous eighth-note melody, while the left hand plays a bass line. A *Leo.* (leaving the orchestra) marking is present in the left hand.

18

p *cresc.*

Reo. * Reo. * simile

21

f (sempre)

Reo. *

23

più f

26

ff

Reo. *

28

più ff

8vb 8vb 8vb

31 *fff* (sempre)

1 3

Reo.

33 *allargando*

Reo.

35 *più fff*

Reo.

38 *a tempo* *fff* *mf* *cresc.*

Reo.

41 *ff martellato*

Reo.

simile

43

6/4

45

6/4

cresc. e rit.

47

Più mosso ♩ = 112

sffp *molto cresc.*

49

sfz *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

sffp *molto cresc.*

51

sfz *sfz* *sfz* *sfz*

sffp *molto cresc.*

53 *sfz sfz sfz sfz*

sfzp molto cresc.

55 **Molto più mosso** ♩ = 144

ffp cresc. poco a poco

57

* *molto pedale (ad lib.)*

59

61

63

65

67

69

71

fff

sffz

sffz

sffz

sffz

sffz

più fff

3

3

3

3

Ped.

Ped.

Presto ♩ = 160

74

74

75

76 *accel.*

Ped.

Ped.

77

77

78

79 *rit.*

80

Moderato ♩ = 80

81

81

82 *fff*

83 *mp (no cresc.)*

(p)

Ped.

84

84

85 *p* *cresc. poco a poco*

86

86

87 *rall.*

88 *fff*

89 *fffz*

3

Ped.

8vb

[3' 15"]

No. 13 - F# Major

[One-Note Ostinato]

Poco presto ♩. = 169

First system of music (measures 1-4). The right hand plays a continuous eighth-note pattern in F# major. The left hand plays a single note (F#) in the bass clef, marked *mp* and *(sans pedale)*.

Second system of music (measures 5-8). The right hand continues the eighth-note pattern. The left hand plays a single note (F#) in the bass clef, marked *p*.

Third system of music (measures 9-14). The right hand plays a continuous eighth-note pattern. The left hand plays a single note (F#) in the bass clef, marked *mp* and *p*. There are two measures with a double bar line and a '2' above the staff, indicating a repeat or a specific fingering.

Fourth system of music (measures 15-18). The right hand continues the eighth-note pattern. The left hand plays a single note (F#) in the bass clef, marked *mf*.

Fifth system of music (measures 19-22). The right hand continues the eighth-note pattern. The left hand plays a single note (F#) in the bass clef.

Sixth system of music (measures 23-26). The right hand continues the eighth-note pattern. The left hand plays a single note (F#) in the bass clef.

27

Musical score for measures 27-30. Treble clef, key of D major (F# C# G# D). The right hand plays a continuous eighth-note melody with slurs. The left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment pattern.

31

Musical score for measures 31-34. Treble clef, key of D major. The right hand continues the eighth-note melody. The left hand continues the eighth-note accompaniment pattern.

35

Musical score for measures 35-38. Treble clef, key of D major. The right hand continues the eighth-note melody. The left hand continues the eighth-note accompaniment pattern.

39

Musical score for measures 39-42. Treble clef, key of D major. The right hand continues the eighth-note melody. The left hand continues the eighth-note accompaniment pattern.

43

Musical score for measures 43-46. Treble clef, key of D major. The right hand continues the eighth-note melody. The left hand continues the eighth-note accompaniment pattern.

47

Musical score for measures 47-50. Treble clef, key of D major. The right hand continues the eighth-note melody. The left hand continues the eighth-note accompaniment pattern.

51

55 *mf*

f (sempre)

59

63

67 *p* (sub.) *cresc.*

72 *f*

The musical score consists of six systems of two staves each. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The notation includes a variety of note values, primarily sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often beamed together in rapid runs. The left hand provides harmonic support with sustained chords and occasional single notes. Dynamics are indicated by *mf*, *f* (sempre), *p* (sub.), *cresc.*, and *f*. A large, diagonal 'SAMPLE' watermark is overlaid on the score.

77

mf

82

f *dim.*

87

p

91

p Red.*

95

(pedale simile)

99

cresc. poco a poco

103

(mf)

[1 time]

107

f

f

sfz

3+3+2

111

p

cresc. poco a poco

(>)

115

(>)

119

(mf)

123

[1 time]

f

2/4

3+3+2

127

mf

131

(no cresc.)

135

(*mf*)

Red.

138

cresc.

Red.

141

f

144

mp (no cresc.)

The musical score consists of six systems of piano notation, each with a treble and bass staff. The time signature is 3/8, and the key signature has three sharps. The right hand plays a steady eighth-note melody, while the left hand provides a harmonic bass line. Dynamics are marked as *mf* at measure 127, *(mf)* at measure 135, *f* at measure 141, and *mp* at measure 144. Performance instructions include '(no cresc.)' at measure 131, 'cresc.' at measure 138, and 'Red.' (pedal) at measures 135, 138, 141, and 144. A large, diagonal 'SAMPLE' watermark is overlaid on the entire page.

148

152

156

dim.

[4' 15"]

No. 14 - E^b Minor

Adagio ♩ = 60

mp *mf* *f* *ff* *mf* *f* *mf*

con pedale

rit.

Red.

[1' 00"]

*With the palm of the right hand slap the lowest strings inside the piano like a bass drum.

**Slide the back of the finger nail of right thumb along the ridges of the strings for the notes indicated. Find the starting note by observing the hammers of the notes held be the left hand and starting on B flat, go up 1 string, then down 3 strings, 2 strings, 1 string and 2 strings respectively.

No. 15 - D^b Major

[Polytonality]

41

Stately ♩ = 56

mp sostenuto *mf* *p* (sempre)

4 *p* *mf* *p* (*p*)

8 *p* *mf* *p*

12 *p* *cresc.* *f*

16 *rit.* *p* *mp* *molto sost.*

Poco più lento ♩ = 50

20

p molto accel. *mp* molto rit. *p* a tempo

mf *p*

[sost. pedale]

23

p molto accel.

mf *p*

[sost. pedale]

26

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

molto rit.

29

a tempo *p*(sub.) *p*(sub.) molto cresc. e accel.

The musical score consists of four systems of staves, each with a treble and bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The time signature is 4/4. The score is marked with various dynamics and performance instructions. A large 'SAMPLE' watermark is diagonally across the page.

- Measure 20:** Treble clef has a series of eighth notes starting on G4, moving up to B4. Bass clef has a series of eighth notes starting on G3, moving up to B3. Dynamics: *p* molto accel. (treble), *mp* molto rit. (bass), *p* a tempo (treble). Pedaling: *mf* (treble), *p* (bass), [sost. pedale].
- Measure 23:** Treble clef has a series of eighth notes starting on G4, moving up to B4. Bass clef has a series of eighth notes starting on G3, moving up to B3. Dynamics: *p* molto accel. (treble), *mf* (bass), *p* (treble). Pedaling: [sost. pedale].
- Measure 26:** Treble clef has a series of eighth notes starting on G4, moving up to B4. Bass clef has a series of eighth notes starting on G3, moving up to B3. Dynamics: *mp* (treble), *p* (bass), *poco rit.* (treble), *a tempo p* (bass), *mf* (treble). Pedaling: molto rit. (treble).
- Measure 29:** Treble clef has a series of eighth notes starting on G4, moving up to B4. Bass clef has a series of eighth notes starting on G3, moving up to B3. Dynamics: *a tempo* (treble), *p*(sub.) (bass), *p*(sub.) molto cresc. e accel. (treble).

Poco più mosso $\text{♩} = 56$

32 *ff* (tutti)

molto pedale

5

5

34 *fff* *dim. e rit.*

5

36 **Tempo lento** $\text{♩} = 50$

p *molto accel.*

rit. *mp*

[sost. pedale]

39 *mp* *molto rit.* *p* *a tempo* *p* *cresc. e accel.*

8va

42

f rit. *mp a tempo* *mf* *rall.*

3

45

p poco accel. *mp* *p*

p a tempo *molto rit.*

[sost. pedale]

48

a tempo *p (sempre)* *rit. a fine*

ped. *8vb*

51

pp *ppp*

8vb *ped. (hold until the end)*

[4' 30"]

No. 16 - B^b Minor

[The Hummingbird]

45

Vivace ♩ = 144

This musical score is for a piece titled "No. 16 - B^b Minor [The Hummingbird]". It is marked "Vivace" with a tempo of 144 beats per minute. The score is written for piano in B-flat minor (three flats) and 2/4 time. It consists of five systems of music, each with a measure number (1-5) in the left margin. The right hand (r.h.) plays a melodic line with slurs and accents, while the left hand (l.h.) plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth-note chords, many of which are marked with a "7" for a seventh chord. Dynamics include piano (*p*), mezzo-piano (*mp*), and piano con sordina (*p_{ced}*). A "pedale simile" instruction is present in the second system. A large, diagonal "SAMPLE" watermark is overlaid across the center of the page. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots in the fifth system.

1 (l.h.)

p *mp*

p_{ced}

2 (l.h.) *

p *mp*

(pedale simile)

3 (l.h.)

p *mp*

4 (l.h.)

p *mp*

5 (r.h.)

p

6

7

7

7

8

p *mp*

10

8va *mp*

12

p *mp*

14

p *cresc.*

16

p

18

mf *dim.*

(hold pedal until end of bar 24)

20

p

(half-pedal)

22

(l.h.) *poco rit.*

24 *a tempo* (l.h.)

p *mp* ($\leftarrow \text{Ped.} \rightarrow$)

26 (l.h.)

p *mp*

28 (r.h.)

p

29 (b.)

30

The musical score consists of six systems of staves. The first two systems (measures 24-27) are for the left hand (l.h.). The third system (measure 28) is for the right hand (r.h.). The fourth system (measure 29) is for the right hand (r.h.). The fifth system (measure 30) is for the right hand (r.h.). The score includes dynamic markings (*p*, *mp*), a pedaling instruction ($\leftarrow \text{Ped.} \rightarrow$), and fingering numbers (7). A large 'SAMPLE' watermark is visible across the score.

31

Measures 31 and 32 of a piano piece. The key signature has four flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat, D-flat). The melody in the right hand features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a trill in measure 32. The left hand provides a simple harmonic accompaniment with quarter and eighth notes. A large, faint 'SAMPLE' watermark is visible across the page.

33

Measures 33 and 34. The musical texture continues with similar melodic and harmonic patterns. The right hand has a trill in measure 34. The left hand accompaniment remains consistent.

35

Measures 35 and 36. The melody in the right hand becomes more active with continuous sixteenth-note passages. The left hand accompaniment consists of quarter notes.

37

Measures 37 and 38. The right hand features a rapid sixteenth-note scale-like passage. The left hand accompaniment continues with quarter notes.

39

8va -----

Measures 39 and 40. The right hand continues with a sixteenth-note passage. The left hand accompaniment remains the same. The *8va* marking indicates an octave shift for the right hand.

41

42

43

fp *accel.*

ped. (hold until bar 66)

44 45

46

cresc.

47 48

49

rit.

50 51 52 53

54

f *a tempo* *dim.* *poco* *a poco*

55

56

57 58 59

58 *8^{va}*

60

62

64 *poco rit.*

66 *a tempo* (l.h.)

p *mp* *p* *mp*

(← *And.* →) *

68 (l.h.)

p *mp* *p* *mp*

70 (no rit.) (l.h.) *8^{va}*

p *mp* *p* *

[2' 00"]

No. 17 - A^b Major

[The Aeolian Harp]

Andante espressivo ♩ = 66

The musical score is written for piano in A-flat major (three flats) and 4/4 time. The tempo is Andante espressivo, marked with a quarter note equal to 66 beats per minute. The piece is divided into three systems, each with a measure number (3, 5, and 7) at the beginning of the first staff. The right hand (treble clef) plays a melody with dynamics ranging from *mp* to *mf*. The left hand (bass clef) plays a bass line with dynamics ranging from *p* to *mf*. The score includes fingerings, articulation marks, and a large 'SAMPLE' watermark. The right hand has a melody with dynamics *mp*, *mf*, and *mf*. The left hand has a bass line with dynamics *p* and *mf*. The score includes fingerings, articulation marks, and a large 'SAMPLE' watermark.

*The harmonic design of this Prelude is modelled directly on Chopin's A Flat Major Etude, Opus 25, No. 1 and is really a tribute to Chopin's inspiration and genius. This Chopin Etude has been nick-named, "The Aeolian Harp," and the reimagining provided here actually adds harp-like gestures strummed with the back of the hand between each short melodic statement. The numbers refer to the division of the inside the piano into four ranges moving from high (Number 1) to low (Number 4). On many grand pianos these areas are created by the cast iron frame. The lines from the numbered boxes indicate the direction to strum the strings and usually move in contrary motion between the hands. As it is always good to play with a musical balance between hands, it is suggested that the right hand strum a bit louder than the left as the lower strings are inherently more resonant.

7

f
p *mf*
8^{va}
2 3 3 4

9

f
p *mf*
8^{va}
3 3 4 4

11

f
p *mf* *mp*
15^{ma}
rall. a tempo
1 2 3 2 3 4

13

mf
p *mf* *mp*
15^{ma}
1 1 1 1 2 2 2 2

No. 18 - F Minor

Allegro ♩ = 152

f marcato

5

p

9

cresc.

f

13

mf > mp

p

mp

p

mp

cresc.

mf < f

18

mf < f

mf < f

mf < f

sfp

cresc.

23

fp *f* *mp* *mf*

27

p *mf* *mp*

31

p (sub.) *cresc.* *p* (sub.) *f*

35

ff *8va*

39

8va

42

mf (sub.)

The musical score consists of six systems of piano music, numbered 23 to 42. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The notation includes various dynamic markings such as *fp* (fortissimo piano), *f* (fortissimo), *mp* (mezzo-piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *p* (piano), and *ff* (fortissimo). There are also markings for *p* (sub.) and *mf* (sub.), likely indicating sub-octave or sub-bass notes. The score features complex textures with many triplets, sixteenth-note runs, and sustained chords. A large, diagonal 'SAMPLE' watermark is overlaid across the entire page.

46 *f pesante*

50 *p (sub.) cresc.*

54 *f* *ffp cresc.*

58 *rit.* *f* *(f)* *a tempo*

63

67 *p* *cresc.* *8va*

The musical score consists of six systems of piano music. The first system (measures 46-49) is marked *f pesante* and features a heavy, slow-moving texture with many beamed sixteenth notes in the bass. The second system (measures 50-53) is marked *p (sub.) cresc.* and shows a gradual increase in volume. The third system (measures 54-57) is marked *f* and *ffp cresc.*, with a strong, accelerating feel. The fourth system (measures 58-62) includes *rit.* (ritardando), *f*, *(f)*, and *a tempo* markings, with a return to a more regular tempo. The fifth system (measures 63-66) continues the melodic and harmonic development. The sixth system (measures 67-70) is marked *p* and *cresc.*, and includes a section marked *8va* (octave) for the right hand, with fingerings indicated by numbers 1-4.

(8^{va})

71

f

p

mp

p

mp

p

mp

75

p

mp

p

80

fp

f (sempre)

84

88

dim.

p

mp

poco rit.

mp

p

mf

p

[2' 45"]

No. 19 - E^b Major

[Deadlines]

Molto Allegro ♩. = 188

p poco legato

6 *mp* *p*

12 *mp* 8va

17 (8va) *p giocoso*

23 (8va)

29 (8va) *mp* *p*

35

mp *p* *cresc.*

(2) 4 1 (2) 4 2 1

1 3 2 1 2 1 3 4

40

3 (2) 1 3 4 3 4 1 4

2 1 1 4 5 3 4 5

45

f *dim.*

51

p

57

mp *p*

63

mp *p* *8va*

(8va) -----

69

75

(8va) -----

76

82

cresc.

83

88

mf *dim.* *p* *cresc.*

89

94

f *p* *8va* *Led.* *

(8va) -----

95

100

cresc. *f* *p* *8va* *Led.* *

(8va) -----

101

106

cresc.

107 *f* *p* 8va-

114 (8va)

121 (8va) *cresc.*

127 (8va)

133 (8va) *mf* *dim.*

139 *p* *cresc.*

The musical score is written for piano and consists of six systems of staves. The first system (measures 107-113) begins with a fortissimo (f) dynamic and a piano (p) dynamic. The second system (measures 114-120) is marked with an 8va line. The third system (measures 121-126) includes a crescendo (cresc.) marking. The fourth system (measures 127-132) is marked with an 8va line. The fifth system (measures 133-138) includes mezzo-forte (mf) and diminuendo (dim.) markings. The sixth system (measures 139-145) begins with a piano (p) dynamic and includes a crescendo (cresc.) marking. The score is written in B-flat major and 4/4 time. It features a complex texture with multiple voices, including a high octave line (8va) and a low line (8va). The piece includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and fingerings.

145

2

f

cresc.

151

4

p(sub.) *cresc.*

157

mf *dim.*

163

p poco rit.

p(sub.) a tempo

Red. *

169

mp *p*

175

mp

8va - - -

181 *(8va)* *cresc.* [Repeat 3 times] *f* *p* *Reo.* *

187 *(8va)* *mp*

193 *(8va)* *p* *no cresc.*

199 *mp* *mf* *f* *p(sub.) cresc.*

205 *f* *Reo.* * *Reo.* * *Reo.* *

211 *p(sub.)* *(no rit.)* *(8va)* *(8vb)* [2' 30"]

No. 20 - C Minor

Maestoso ♩ = 60

fff *mf* *p*

mf *p*

* Tap ring on top of fallboard.

*The use of a ring for tapping is optional but does provide great contrast to the alternative of tapping with the knuckles.

fff *mf* *p* *ff* *mf* *p*

mf *p* *mf* *p*

Tap ring on the piano's name above the keyboard.

Slap underside of the keyboard.

f *mf* *p* *mf* *mf* *p*

mf *p* *mf* *p*

Tap ring on the side of piano.

Tap ring on the underside of keyboard.

mp *mf* *p* *p* *mf* *p*

mf *p* *mp* *pp*

Tap ring on the inside of the piano's cast iron frame.

Slap the side of the piano.

8

8va

Slap underside of the keyboard.

pp *mf* *p* *ppp* *mf* *p*

p *pp* *mf* *p*

Tap ring on a piano bench leg.

Tap ring on top of fallboard.

[1' 20"]

No. 21 - B^b Major

Adagio espressivo ♩ = 46

p (no cresc.) *rit.* *mp*

(con pedale)

3 *p* *mp* *p* *a tempo* *mp* *rit.*

(non arp.)

8va

3 3 3 3

p *mp* *p* *a tempo* *poco agitato* *mf* *mp*

(r.h.) (r.h.)

9 *fp* molto accel. (no cresc.) *rit.*

(*Red.*)

11 *a tempo* *mp* *p* cresc. e accel.

13 *ff* dim. e rit.

15 *mp* a tempo *rit.* *p*

[1' 45"]

No. 22 - G Minor

Allegro energico ♩ = 132

mp (legato)

(use pedal sparingly to animate the velocity)

2

p (sub.)

Red. *

Red. *

Red. *

Red. *

Red. *

Red. *

3

cresc.

fp

Red. *

Red.

5

* Red. * Red. * Red. * simile

7

p (sub.)

Red. *

Red. *

Red. *

Red. *

9

(no cresc.)

Red. *

Red. *

Red. *

Red. *

Red. *

11

f *Leo.* *

13

fp *fp* *cresc. poco a poco*

15

Leo. * *simile*

17

Leo. * *simile*

19

f //

21 *8va* *p (sub.)* *Leo. ** *Leo. ** *Leo. ** *Leo. ** *Leo. ** *Leo. ** *Leo. ** *Leo. **

23 *8va* *pp* *Leo. ** *Leo. ** *Leo. ** *Leo. ** *Leo.* ***

26 *sffz rit.* *p* *a tempo* *Leo.*

28 *cresc.* *Leo. ** *Leo. ** ***

30 *ff* *(no rit.)* *fff* *Leo.* *** *Leo.*

[1' 10"]

No. 23 - F Major

[Spring Thaw]

Lento ♩ = 80

** 15^{ma}* -----

mp

poco cresc. (simile)

*ped. * ped. ** (pedale simile)

*Randomly pluck different strings inside the piano in the rhythm indicated with the right hand finger nails using the highest range of the piano. These strings do not have dampers and will resonate well. Do note that it is often difficult for the pianist to gauge how loud these plucked strings sound while seated at the piano and it is advisable to ask a listener to comment on the balance. If the inside of the piano is not accessible, high random notes can be played on the keyboard.

4 *(15^{ma})* -----

mf dim.

7 *(15^{ma})* -----

(Try to pluck the same note if possible)

p

(poco accel.)

Molto allegro ♩ = ♩

10 *8^{va}* -----

p (sub.)

poco cresc.

molto pedale

13

16

mf dolce

19

cresc. *p (sub.)* *cresc.*

22

25

f *mp* *cresc.*

28

f (sempre) *poco rit.* *a tempo* *p (sub.)* *cresc. e appassionata*

Detailed description of the musical score: The score consists of five systems of piano music. The first system (measures 16-18) begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The right hand plays a series of eighth notes, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note bass line. A dynamic marking of *mf dolce* is present. The second system (measures 19-21) continues the bass line and introduces a crescendo in the right hand. A dynamic marking of *p (sub.)* is shown. The third system (measures 22-24) features a complex right-hand melody with many beamed notes and a crescendo. The fourth system (measures 25-27) starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a crescendo, followed by a mezzo-piano (*mp*) section. The fifth system (measures 28-30) begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a 'poco rit.' instruction, followed by a return to tempo ('a tempo') and a 'cresc. e appassionata' section. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

31

poco rit.

Moderato ♩ = ♩

34

ffp 8va-

37

f *dim. e poco rit.* *p*

Tempo primo ♩ = 80

40

mf *mp* *poco cresc.*

* (pedal as before)

44

mf *dim. e rit.* *p*

Prelude No. 24 - D Minor

73

[Le Fini]

Poco allegro ♩ = 96

sfz *sfz*

**8vb*

ped. (hold until bar 12)

*Silently depress these keys first so that the RH does not inadvertently strike these notes while playing the low D.

4

fp

6

(half-pedal)

8

(half-pedal)

10

(half-pedal)

(no cresc.)

12

fp

ped.

14

(pedale simile)

16 *fp*

18 *fp*

20 *mp* *f*

22 *sfz* *mp* *f*

24 *sfz* *mp* *f*

musical score for piano, measures 14-24. The score is in B-flat major and 4/4 time. Measures 14-19 are in bass clef, featuring a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand and chords in the right hand. Measure 20 is the first of a system with two staves. The right staff (treble clef) has a melody of eighth notes, while the left staff (bass clef) has a bass line with accents. Measures 21-24 continue this pattern. Dynamics include fortissimo (fp), mezzo-piano (mp), forte (f), and sforzando (sfz). A 'pedale simile' instruction is present at the start of measure 14. A large 'SAMPLE' watermark is diagonally across the page.

26 *mp*

cresc.

f

sfz

28

ffp

30

(half-pedal)

32

(half-pedal)

34

(half-pedal)

36

mfp

And.

✱

38

Measures 38-39 of a piano piece. The music is in B-flat major (two sharps) and 3/4 time. The right hand features a series of chords, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Accents are placed on the first and fourth chords of each measure.

mf
ped.

40

Measures 40-41. The musical texture continues with the same chordal pattern in the right hand and eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand. An asterisk (*) is placed at the end of measure 41.

mf
(pedale simile)

42

Measures 42-43. The pattern of chords and accompaniment is maintained. A large, faint watermark is visible across the page.

mf

44

Measures 44-45. The musical notation continues with consistent chordal and accompanimental patterns.

mf

46

Measures 46-47. The musical structure remains consistent with the previous measures.

mf

48

Measures 48-49. The final measures of this system, showing the continuation of the musical theme.

mf

50

fp

52

fp

54

fp poco cresc. e allargando

Poco meno mosso ♩ = 92

56

fp

58

mp *p*

60

mp *p*

(poco rit. a tempo)

62

mp *p*

64

(no cresc.)

66

molto cresc.

68

70

p(sub.) *p(sub.)*

This musical score is for a piano piece, spanning measures 62 to 70. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The score is written for a grand piano, with a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. Measures 62-63 show a right-hand melody of eighth-note chords and a left-hand accompaniment of eighth notes. A crescendo line spans these measures, with dynamics *mp* and *p* marked. Measure 64 continues the right-hand melody with accents and a 'no cresc.' instruction, while the left hand has a change in accompaniment. Measures 65-66 show the right-hand melody continuing with accents, and the left hand with a 'molto cresc.' instruction. Measures 67-68 continue the right-hand melody with accents. Measures 69-70 feature a more complex right-hand melody with sixteenth-note runs and a left-hand accompaniment of eighth-note chords. Dynamics *p(sub.)* are marked at the beginning and end of these measures.

72

p (sub.) (no cresc.)

8vb

74

cresc. e accel.

76

6/4

6/4

Più mosso ♩ = 100

78

***ff* brillante**

ff

pedale simile

80

più ff

8vb

8vb

8vb

83

p

p

p

83 84 85

86

cresc.

(half-pedal ad lib.)

89

The musical score for measures 89-92 is written for piano. It consists of two systems, each with two staves. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The music is marked with a 'P' (Piano) dynamic. The right hand plays a series of chords and single notes, while the left hand plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The music is marked with a 'P' (Piano) dynamic.

92

ff *accel.*

8vb *Ped.* *8vb* *(loco)* *8vb* *8vb* *8vb* *Ped.*

fffz

95

p molto cresc. e allargando

[Largo]

fff

fff

(half-pedal)

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

[4' 15"]

No. 9 in E Major [The Singing Clock] — The subtitle for this prelude is really an instruction to play the melody as expressively as possible while keeping the accompanimental fabric mechanically exact.

No. 10 in C Sharp Minor — The four-part texture of this prelude is almost orchestral in the way that the part-writing moves expansively across the entire keyboard in loud, forceful strokes.

No. 11 in B Major [The Autoharp] — At just six bars in length, this is the shortest prelude of the set. As all the sounds are created by strumming the strings inside the piano, it is certainly the most evocatively distinctive of the preludes and performers should strive to give the phrases an expressive musical shape.

No. 12 in G Sharp Minor [Das Thema] — This is one of the hardest pieces in the collection, requiring stamina and precision to capture the driving rhythmic energy while always projecting the four-note motive that is heard in virtually every bar. In many ways, Prelude No. 12 is the companion to Prelude No. 24 in that both works are quite unrelenting in their organic expansion of a single idea, culminating in a powerful ending.

No. 13 in F Sharp Major [One-Note Ostinato] — The very simple materials used in Prelude No. 13 give the music a sense of ‘freshness’ and ‘new beginnings’. This quality was intentionally applied by the composer to delineate the location of this prelude as the half-way point in the set. There is a kind of “pop” music feel to the groove that is created by the octave repetitions of the tonic pitch in a 3+3+2 rhythmic grouping. Playing this music with a relaxed right-hand wrist is crucial to avoiding fatigue or a repetitive stress injury.

No. 14 in E Flat Minor — This prelude is a short exploration of the piano as a substitute for a bass drum.

No. 15 in D Flat Major [Polytonality] — By duration, this is the longest Prelude in the set and one of the most expressive. The piece is organized around the juxtaposition of D Flat Major with G Major such that both key signatures are used at the same time, one for each hand. The opening 18-bar theme becomes the basis for a variation-like treatment in the second half of the Prelude.

No. 16 in B Flat Minor [The Hummingbird] — Of all the subtitled preludes, the allusion to the hummingbird is significant in the way that this image inspires a performance of the music that is both fast and fleeting. The broken-chord figuration can almost be played as fast as possible, taking just a bit of time at the important cadential moments.

No. 17 in A Flat Major [The Aeolian Harp] — The first etude of Chopin’s Opus 25 set of twelve Etudes is also in the key of A Flat Major. Due to the fast broken-chord patterns in both hands, this etude has been given the nickname, “The Aeolian Harp.” Burge’s Prelude No. 17 is a kind of gloss on the first phrase of this Chopin Etude. Additionally though, Burge incorporates harp-like interruptions played inside the piano between each chord change

in an attempt to really underscore the music’s harp-like influence.

No. 18 in F Minor — As this was the final prelude composed of the twenty-four, its fast, syncopated character and motivic emphasis on the interval of a falling or rising minor tenth, strongly reflects the desire on the composer’s part to include a prelude that is quite different from the others.

No. 19 in E Flat Major [Deadlines] — Somewhat like a scherzo, this prelude is organized around a very fast compound triple meter through which two-handed, interlocking gestures traverse the entire range of the piano. The slight hints of melodic material provide brief moments of calm, as if one is just catching their breathe before rushing along to the next pressing deadline.

No. 20 in C Minor — Like many of the other short preludes in this set, there is a strong procedural element in the overall design of this prelude. The music of Prelude No. 20 is really just one long diminuendo as the chords and melodic material gradually move into higher registers. A layer of rhythmic counterpoint is added to the music in the way that the pianist’s left hand taps the same pattern on different parts of the piano.

No. 21 in B Flat Major — This prelude consists of just five expressive phrases that all begin with the same half-diminished seventh chord (B flat-D-E-G). Each phrase is pulled in a different harmonic direction until the last phrase finally shifts towards a B flat major triad at the end. Indeed, the only tonic triad heard in root position in this prelude is found in the last bar.

No. 22 in G Minor — This prelude picks up the same half-diminished seventh sonority that dominates Prelude No. 21, but in Prelude No. 22 it is now treated in a G minor context. Throughout most of this prelude, both hands play the same fast 16th-note passages an octave apart.

No. 23 in F Major [Spring Thaw] — This really is the only prelude of the set that has a clear ABA structure. The outer sections require the pianist to pluck high strings with the right hand while the left hand expands a wedge-like melodic figure. This figure becomes the melodic building block for the more passionately written middle portion of the prelude. In the same way that the second prelude captured a sonic picture of “Bells in Winter,” this second-last prelude musically represents the melting of winter into spring. The title, “Spring Thaw,” is a tribute to Canadian poet, Margaret Avison, who in her poetry often drew spiritual significance from the changing of the seasons and whose poetry is an oft-used source for John Burge.

No. 24 in D Minor (Le Fini) — Chopin’s Preludes end with three, very strongly accented low D’s. John Burge shifts this around by starting his last prelude with these same three notes. Thereafter, the music introduces a pattern of alternating chords between hands that steadily increases in intensity as the music modulates through a variety of different keys. The ending is percussively loud, thereby projecting a strong conclusion for not just this prelude, but for the entire set of preludes as well.



John Burge (b. 1961, Dryden, Ontario) is a Canadian composer who has been teaching at Queen's University in Kingston since 1987. Like many composers he counts the piano as his primary instrument and his life has been greatly enriched by the study and performance of music written for the piano. The overall design of John Burge's *Twenty-Four Preludes* for solo piano (one in each of the possible 24 major and minor keys) reveals his affinity to the music of Chopin. This connection is further underscored by a couple of rather specific allusions to two of Chopin compositions (heard in Burge's Preludes Number 17 and 24). Equally though, the Preludes of Debussy, with their expressive textural sonorities and colour, can also be considered touchstones, especially in the way that Burge provides subtitles for fourteen of his Preludes (Debussy added a descriptive title to each of his Twenty-four Preludes).

Burge composed this set of preludes over five years (2011-2015) trying to personally premiere a few at a time, so that the music had a long period of gestation. A sabbatical leave from teaching during the 2014/15 academic year provided an opportunity to polish the preludes and premiere the set in its entirety (a complete performance takes about one hour). The most unusual aspect of these Preludes is that eight of them use extended instrumental techniques such as strumming strings inside the piano. These techniques are very simple to execute and do not require any advance preparation of the piano but in most cases can only be realized successfully on a grand piano with the music stand removed. As a guiding principle, Burge tried to embrace each Prelude's tonic key in an audibly recognizable fashion so that at times the music is emphatically tonal, even in the Preludes that involve non-traditional performance practices.

Given the shortness of many of these preludes there is quite a bit of potential for the music to be useful for teaching purposes and as possible repertoire for performance competitions. Although assigning levels of difficulty can be very subjective, John Burge suggests the following grade levels. Please note that many of the consecutively numbered preludes sharing the same key signature have a natural connection and flow easily one into the other. As such, these pairs have often been joined together in the list below, requiring that both preludes be performed as a unit to satisfy the indicated level of difficulty. However, some of the preludes are so short (especially Numbers 2, 11 and 14) that they have simply been listed as optional preludes to perform with the Prelude sharing the same key signature, although it is always stronger to play two contrasting preludes to demonstrate a performer's musicianship and technical facility.

- Grade 8: -Prelude No. 5 in D
 -Prelude No. 8 in F Sharp Minor
- Grade 9: -Prelude No. 1 in C Major (optional to add No. 2 in A minor)
 -Prelude No. 7 in A Major
- Grade 10: -Preludes No. 3 in G Major AND No. 4 in E Minor
 -Prelude No. 6 in B Minor
 -Prelude No. 13 in F Sharp Major (optional to add No. 14 in E Flat Minor)
 -Preludes No. 17 in A Flat Major AND No. 18 in F Minor
 -Preludes No. 21 in B Flat Major AND No. 22 in G Minor
- Diploma: -Preludes No. 9 in E Major AND No. 10 in C Sharp Minor
 -Prelude No. 12 in G Sharp Minor (optional to add No. 11 in B Major)
 -Preludes No. 15 in D Flat Major AND No. 16 in B Flat Minor
 -Preludes No. 19 in E Flat Major AND No. 20 in C Minor
 -Preludes No. 23 in F Major AND No. 24 in D Minor

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