America the Beautiful

Easy Piano Sheet Music

Samuel A. Ward (1882)

Level 2 | Full score, fingering, practice tips

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America the Beautiful

Key	Time Signature	Tempo	Difficulty	Measures
C major	4/4	Moderato, 92 BPM	Beginner - Level 2	16

About This Piece

Samuel Augustus Ward (1847-1903) composed the tune MATERNA in 1882. The first print found is The Parish Choir, No. 378 (Medford, Massachusetts: C. L. Hutchins, 12 July 1888), as Hymn Tune 27; hymnals usually give 1892. The words are by Katharine Lee Bates (died 1929), set to this tune in 1910, and are not printed here. This score follows the 1888 print a half step lower, in C major rather than D-flat, so the C#5 of measure 7 is Ward's D natural. The barring is rewritten in 4/4 with an upbeat, the Amen is omitted and the left hand is a simplified version of Ward's bass.

Notes and Hand Positions

Fingering Guide

Right Hand: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, C#5, D5, E5
Thumb on E4 or D4 and finger 3 on G4 for the opening phrases; F4 to B4 on fingers 2-5 in measure 3. Ring finger on D5 at the end of measure 6, then C#5 on 3, E5 on 5, A4 on the thumb. Section B starts with 5 on E5 and 4 on C5 and D5.

Left Hand: G2, A2, C3, C#3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4 (single notes, mostly half and whole notes)
Index on C3, pinky on G2, thumb on D3. Rising lines C3-C#3-D3 (measure 4), G3-A3-B3 (measure 8) and F3-G3-A3-B3-C4 (measures 11-12, fingers 5-4-3-2-1), then an octave drop to C3. Last note C3 with the index.

Notes Used in This Piece

Right Hand

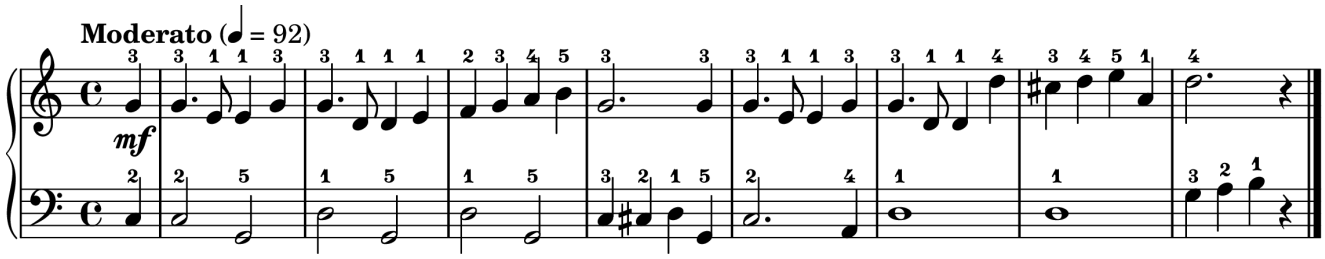
Note	On the Staff	On the Keyboard	Finger
D4	Just below the treble staff	Between two black keys above C4	Thumb (1)
E4	Bottom line of treble staff	Right of the two black keys	Thumb (1)
F4	First space of treble staff	Left of the three black keys	Index (2)
G4	Second line of treble staff	Between F# and G# black keys	Middle (3)
A4	Second space of treble staff	Between G# and A# black keys	Index (2)
B4	Middle line of treble staff	Right of the three black keys	Middle (3)
C5	Third space of treble staff	One octave above middle C	Ring (4)
C#5	Third space, sharp sign	Black key between C5 and D5	Middle (3)
D5	Fourth line of treble staff	Between two black keys above C5	Ring (4)
E5	Fourth space of treble staff	Right of two black keys above C5	Pinky (5)

Left Hand

Note	On the Staff	On the Keyboard	Finger
G2	Bottom line of bass staff	Octave and a fourth below middle C	Pinky (5)
A2	First space of bass staff	Octave and a third below middle C	Ring (4)
C3	Second space of bass staff	One octave below middle C	Index (2)
C#3	Second space, sharp sign	Black key between C3 and D3	Index (2)
D3	Third line of bass staff	Between two black keys below C4	Thumb (1)
E3	Third space of bass staff	Right of two black keys below C4	Ring (4)
F3	Fourth line of bass staff	Left of three black keys below C4	Middle (3)
G3	Fourth space of bass staff	A fourth below middle C	Middle (3)
A3	Top line of bass staff	A third below middle C	Middle (3)
B3	Space above bass staff	Just left of middle C	Thumb (1)
C4	Ledger line above bass staff	Middle C	Thumb (1)

Section A - First Half (Pickup and Measures 1-8)

Two phrases open with the same figure, a dotted-quarter G4 and an eighth that falls to E4, then to D4. Measure 3 climbs from F4 to B4 and measure 4 rests on a long G4. After the leap from D4 to D5 at the end of measure 6, measure 7 brings C#5, the one sharp of the melody, and the half closes on D5.

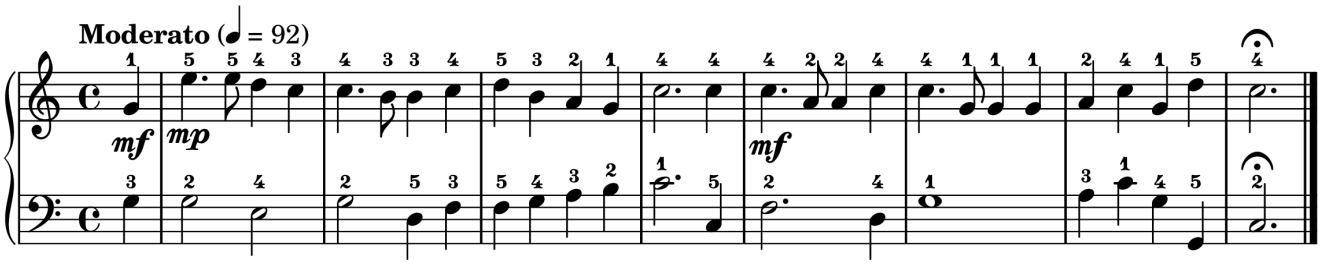


America the Beautiful - Section A - First Half

> **How to Practice This Section**
>
> Clap the dotted quarter and eighth while counting 1, 2-and until the eighth falls late in the beat without effort. Play the right hand at half speed next and look ahead to the leap up to D5 before you reach it.

Section B - Second Half (Measures 9-16)

Softer at first (mp), section B begins on E5, the top note, and steps down through the same dotted rhythm. In measure 11 the right hand falls from D5 to G4 while the left hand climbs from F3 to middle C. The last line returns to mf and ends on a C5 held under a fermata.

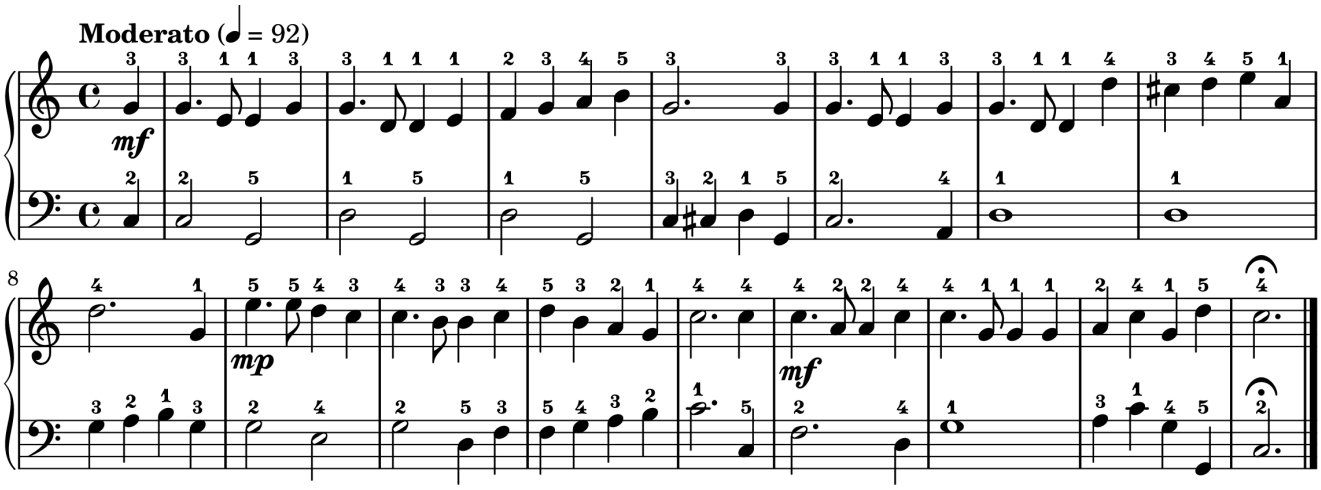


America the Beautiful - Section B - Second Half

> **How to Practice This Section**
>
> Practice measures 11-12 hands together on their own, slowly, until the two hands move apart smoothly. Keep measure 9 soft and wait for measure 13 to play louder again.

Full Score

Here is the complete piece with all sections combined.



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Step-by-Step Practice Guide

Step 1: Right Hand Alone

1. Upbeat and measures 1-2: finger 3 on G4, thumb on E4 and then on D4
2. Measure 3: F4, G4, A4, B4 on fingers 2, 3, 4, 5, then G4 with 3
3. Measures 6-8: from D4 on the thumb up to D5 on finger 4, C#5 on 3, E5 on 5, A4 on 1
4. Measures 9-12: pinky on E5, ring finger on C5 and D5, thumb on G4 in measure 11
5. Play the whole melody at x0.5, then at x0.75, counting the dotted rhythm aloud

Step 2: Left Hand Alone

1. Measures 1-3: C3 with the index, G2 with the pinky, D3 with the thumb
2. Measure 4: C3, C#3, D3 on fingers 3, 2, 1, then down to G2
3. Measures 11-12: F3, G3, A3, B3 on 5, 4, 3, 2, middle C on the thumb, then C3 on the pinky
4. Last bar: C3 with the index, held under the fermata

Step 3: Hands Together

1. Start at about 66 to the quarter, the left hand mostly on beats 1 and 3
2. Section A hands together in two parts, the upbeat to measure 4 and measures 5-8
3. Section B hands together, with measures 11-12 practiced on their own first
4. Target 92 to the quarter: mf, mp at measure 9, mf again at measure 13



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