



Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy

Easy Piano Sheet Music

P. I. Tchaikovsky (1892)

Level 3 | Full score, fingering, practice tips

Door 19 of the Free Piano Advent Calendar

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Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy

Key	Time Signature	Tempo	Difficulty	Measures
E minor	2/4	Andante, 80 BPM	Beginner - Level 3	19

About This Piece

This is the theme of the Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy from The Nutcracker, Op. 71, by P. I. Tchaikovsky (d. 1893), published in Moscow by Jurgenson in 1892 (Suite Op. 71a, No. 2b). The piece has no words. We read it from Tchaikovsky's own piano solo arrangement of the Suite, in the 1898 Rahter reprint, and checked it against the celesta part in a Breitkopf & Härtel edition from about 1910. The source prints the theme in sixths. We keep only the top voice, one octave below the written celesta part, in the source key of E minor and 2/4. The left hand takes the pizzicato bass roots and single off-beat notes from the source chords. The short closing E in measure 19 is ours.

Notes and Hand Positions

Fingering Guide

Right Hand: E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, C#5, D5, D#5, E5, F#5, G5, B5

Upper position for measures 3-6: pinky (5) on G5, ring (4) on F#5, middle (3) on E5, index (2) on D#5 and D5, thumb (1) on B4, with C#5 on 3 and C5 on 2. Measure 7 moves the same 5-3-5-4 shape down an octave (G4, E4, F#4), and measure 8 stretches from the thumb on B4 back up to the pinky on G5. In measures 15-17 the 5-3-5-4 figure moves down a step each bar, and measure 18 spans B4 to B5 with 1-2-3-5.

Left Hand: E2, F#2, G2, A2, A#2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F#3, G3, A3, B3, C4, C#4, D4 (single notes, staccato)

No fixed position: short staccato notes, with rests to move. Measures 1-2: E2 on 5, E3 on 1. From measure 3 the pinky (5) stays on E3 while the thumb (1) walks up B3, C4, C#4, D4. Runs: m6 E3-D3-C3-B2 on 1-2-3-4 to A#2 on 5, then A2, G2, F#2 on 3-4-5; m10 on 1-2-3-4; m14 on 2-3-4-5. Measures 15-17: thumb on C#4, B3, A3, finger 4 a fifth lower; G3 and B2 on the thumb, final E2 on 5.

Notes Used in This Piece

Right Hand

Note	On the Staff	On the Keyboard	Finger
E4	Bottom line of treble staff	Right of the two black keys	Middle (3)
F#4	First space, treble (sharp)	First of the three black keys	Ring (4)
G4	Second line of treble staff	Between first two of 3 black keys	Pinky (5)
A4	Second space of treble staff	Between last two of 3 black keys	Middle (3)
B4	Middle line of treble staff	Right of the three black keys	Thumb (1)
C5	Third space of treble staff	One octave above middle C	Index (2)
C#5	Third space, treble (sharp)	First of the two black keys	Middle (3)
D5	Fourth line of treble staff	Between the two black keys	Index (2)
D#5	Fourth line, treble (sharp)	Second of the two black keys	Index (2)
E5	Fourth space of treble staff	Right of the two black keys	Middle (3)
F#5	Top line of treble staff (sharp)	First of the three black keys	Ring (4)
G5	Space just above treble staff	Between first two of 3 black keys	Pinky (5)
B5	Above 1st ledger line, treble	Right of the three black keys	Pinky (5)

Left Hand

Note	On the Staff	On the Keyboard	Finger
E2	1st ledger line below bass staff	Right of the two black keys	Pinky (5)
F#2	Space below bass staff (sharp)	First of the three black keys	Pinky (5)
G2	Bottom line of bass staff	Between first two of 3 black keys	Ring (4)
A2	First space of bass staff	Between last two of 3 black keys	Middle (3)
A#2	First space, bass (sharp)	Last of the three black keys	Pinky (5)
B2	Second line of bass staff	Right of the three black keys	Thumb (1)
C3	Second space of bass staff	One octave below middle C	Middle (3)
D3	Third line of bass staff	Between the two black keys	Ring (4)
E3	Third space of bass staff	Right of the two black keys	Pinky (5)
F#3	Fourth line, bass (sharp)	First of the three black keys	Thumb (1)
G3	Fourth space of bass staff	Between first two of 3 black keys	Thumb (1)
A3	Top line of bass staff	Between last two of 3 black keys	Thumb (1)
B3	Space just above bass staff	White key just left of middle C	Thumb (1)
C4	Ledger line above bass	Middle C	Thumb (1)
C#4	Ledger line above bass (sharp)	Black key just right of middle C	Thumb (1)
D4	Above the ledger line, bass staff	Between the two black keys	Thumb (1)

Section A - Intro and Theme (Measures 1-10)

Two bars of left hand alone, E2 and E3 at pp, then the theme at mp: G5, E5, G5, F#5, and repeated notes stepping down by half steps from D5 to B4. Measure 7 repeats the opening an octave lower over a bass that walks down A#2, A2, G2, F#2, and measure 8 jumps back up to G5 at f.

Andante ma non troppo (♩ = 80)



Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy - Section A - Intro and Theme

How to Practice This Section

Play measures 3-6 right hand alone at x0.5 and change fingers on the repeated D5 (2-3-4). Bounce each note from the fingertip so it stays short, even when the tempo is slow.

Section B - Return and Falling Sequence (Measures 11-19)

The theme returns at *mp* for four bars. Then the same short figure starts a step lower each bar, on E5, D5 and C5, while the left hand pairs the thumb on C#4, B3 and A3 with a note a fifth lower. Measure 18 sweeps up B4 to B5 in 32nd notes, and the piece ends on a short E5 over E2.

Andante ma non troppo (♩ = 80)



Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy - Section B - Return and Falling Sequence

How to Practice This Section

Loop measure 18 alone: B4, D#5, F#5, B5 with 1-2-3-5 as one quick gesture of the hand, then the E5. Start at x0.5 and speed up only when all four notes sound even.

Full Score

Here is the complete piece with all sections combined.

Andante ma non troppo (♩ = 80)



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Step-by-Step Practice Guide

Step 1: Right Hand Alone

1. Measure 3: G5, E5, G5, F#5 with 5-3-5-4, short and light from the fingertips
2. Measures 4-5: change fingers on the repeated D5 (2-3-4); C#5 starts on 3 and C5 on 2
3. Measure 6: B4 on the thumb, E5 on 4, C5 on 2, then measure 7 puts the 5-3-5-4 shape an octave lower
4. Measures 15-17: the 5-3-5-4 figure starts on E5, then D5, then C5
5. Measure 18: B4, D#5, F#5, B5 with 1-2-3-5 in one quick sweep, then E5

Step 2: Left Hand Alone

1. Measures 1-2: E2 with 5, E3 with 1, staccato and pp
2. Measures 3-4 and 12: pinky on E3, the thumb walks up B3, C4, C#4, D4 on the off-beats
3. Measures 6-8: E3-D3-C3-B2 on 1-2-3-4 to A#2 on 5, then A2, G2, F#2 on 3-4-5
4. Measures 14-17: run on 2-3-4-5, then thumb on C#4, B3, A3 with finger 4 a fifth lower

Step 3: Hands Together

1. Start at x0.5 (40 to the quarter) and count eighths out loud



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2. Measures 3-6: line up the right-hand sixteenths against the left hand's steady eighths, one bar at a time
 3. Keep the left-hand runs at the end of measures 6, 10 and 14 light so they lead into the next bar
 4. Target 80 to the quarter: pp intro, mp theme, f in measures 8-10 and 18, and a short final E



Because true virtuosos deserve nothing less.

One carol and one short task a day, December 1 to 24.

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