The Holly and the Ivy

Easy Piano Sheet Music

Traditional (Cecil J. Sharp, 1911)

Level 2 | Full score, fingering, practice tips

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The Holly and the Ivy

Key	Time Signature	Tempo	Difficulty	Measures
G major	3/4	Andante mod., 88 BPM	Beginner - Level 2	16

About This Piece

The tune is traditional. Cecil J. Sharp (died 1924) noted it from Mrs Mary Clayton of Chipping Campden and first printed it in his English Folk-Carols (London: Novello, 1911), as No. VII. The words are traditional too and are not printed here. The score keeps Sharp's key of G major, his 3/4 meter and his melody, with his own rhythm for the chorus: an eighth rest and a pickup before measure 9, and quarters on D5 and B4 in measure 10. Only the last bar changes: G4 is held for three beats, because the quarter rest in Sharp's print leads back to the next verse. The left hand adds a single-note bass.

Notes and Hand Positions

> **Fingering Guide**
>
> Right Hand: D4, E4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5
> Open hand at first: 1 on G4, 2 on B4, 4 on D5, 5 on E5. From m. 4: 1 on G4, 2 on A4, 3 on B4, 4 on C5, 5 on D5. Measure 6: thumb on E4, 2 repeats it, thumb down to D4, then up to G4.
>
> Left Hand: G2, B2, C3, D3 (single notes, one or two per measure)
> One position for the whole carol: 5 on G2, 3 on B2, 2 on C3, 1 on D3. The ring finger stays over A2, which is never played.

Notes Used in This Piece

Right Hand

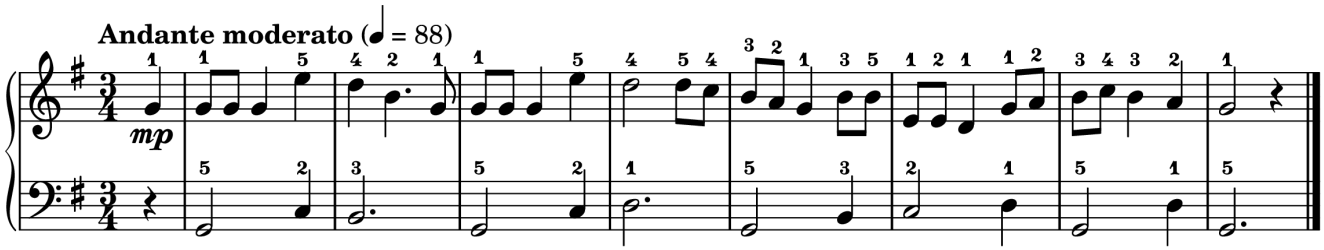
Note	On the Staff	On the Keyboard	Finger
D4	Just below the treble staff	Between two black keys above C4	Thumb (1)
E4	Bottom line of treble staff	Right of two black keys above C4	Thumb (1)
G4	Second line of treble staff	Between F# and G# black keys	Thumb (1)
A4	Second space of treble staff	Between G# 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)
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)
B2	Second line of bass staff	Octave and a step below middle C	Middle (3)
C3	Second space of bass staff	One octave below middle C	Index (2)
D3	Middle line of bass staff	Between two black keys below C4	Thumb (1)

Section A - The Verse (Pickup + Measures 1-8)

Marked mp. The thumb plays four Gs, the pickup and three more, and the pinky reaches up a sixth to E5. Measure 4 holds D5 for two beats, measure 6 dips to E4 and D4, the lowest notes, and the verse ends on a half-note G4 in measure 8.

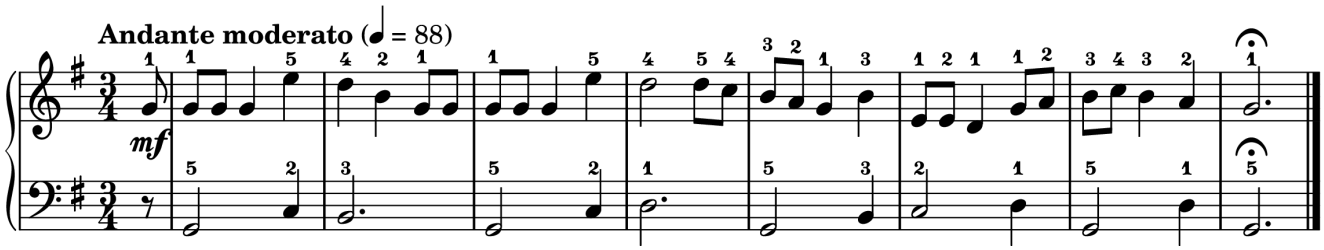


The Holly and the Ivy - Section A - The Verse

> **How to Practice This Section**
>
> Play the pickup and measures 1-3 with the right hand alone at x0.5, keeping the hand open from G4 to E5. Then work on measure 6: E4 with 1, the repeat with 2, and the thumb down to D4.

Section B - The Chorus (Pickup + Measures 9-16)

Marked mf, after an eighth rest and a single G4 pickup. The chorus follows the verse with Sharp's own rhythm: quarters on D5 and B4 in measure 10, a quarter B4 at the end of measure 13. The last bar holds G4 for three beats under a fermata.



The Holly and the Ivy - Section B - The Chorus

> **How to Practice This Section**
>
> Compare measures 10 and 13 with measures 2 and 5 before you play: measure 10 has two G4 eighths where measure 2 has one, and measure 13 has one B4 where measure 5 has two. Then loop measures 12-15 at x0.75.

Full Score

Here is the complete piece with all sections combined.



The Holly and the Ivy - Traditional (Cecil J. Sharp, 1911)

Step-by-Step Practice Guide

Step 1: Right Hand Alone

1. Thumb on G4, pinky on E5: play the pickup and measure 1 with the hand kept open
2. Measure 4: hold D5 with 4, then 5 on the repeated D5 and 4 on C5
3. Measure 5: B4 with 3, then 5 on the repeated B4 at the end of the bar
4. Measure 6: E4 with 1, the repeat with 2, thumb down to D4, then up to G4

Step 2: Left Hand Alone

1. Pinky on G2, finger 3 on B2, finger 2 on C3, thumb on D3
2. Measures 1-2: a half-note G2, a quarter C3, then B2 held three beats
3. Measures 5-7: G2 to B2, C3 to D3, then G2 to D3
4. Last bar: G2 held under the fermata with the pinky

Step 3: Hands Together

1. Hands together at about 66 to the quarter, counting 1-2-3 out loud
2. Section A first; the left hand comes in on measure 1, after the pickup
3. Section B: check the eighth rest in measure 8 and the quarters in measures 10 and 13
4. Target 88 to the quarter: mp in the verse, mf in the chorus, fermata held



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