



The Twelve Days of Christmas

Easy Piano Sheet Music

Traditional, arr. Frederic Austin (1909)

Level 2 | Full score, fingering, practice tips

Door 9 of the Free Piano Advent Calendar

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The Twelve Days of Christmas

Key	Time Signature	Tempo	Difficulty	Measures
F major	4/4 and 3/4	Allegro, 108 BPM	Beginner - Level 2	13

About This Piece

This is the melody Frederic Austin published for voice and piano in London with Novello in 1909 (plate 13056), in F major. Austin died in 1952. The words are traditional and were printed in *Mirth Without Mischief* around 1780; they are not printed here. Our score keeps Austin's key and his changes between 4/4 and 3/4, and the melody is left as he wrote it, including the B natural in measure 7. It plays his verse 1 and then his verse 5, the first verse in which the long held phrase of measures 7-8 appears. The flourish Austin gives that phrase in the last verse is not used. The single-note left hand is ours.

Notes and Hand Positions

Fingering Guide

Right Hand: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, Bb4, B4, C5, D5

Four positions. The pickup and measure 1 start with the thumb (1) on middle C, index (2) on E4 and middle finger (3) on F4. From measure 2 the thumb moves to G4, with index (2) on A4, middle (3) on Bb4 (on B natural in measure 7), ring (4) on C5 and pinky (5) on D5; the thumb reaches back to F4 at each cadence. Measure 9 uses an F position (thumb on F4, pinky on C5). During its last F4 the hand opens into a B-flat chord shape for measure 10: pinky (5) on Bb4, thumb (1) on D4, middle (3) on F4. At the breath before measure 11 it moves one key down into a C position, pinky (5) on G4 down to the thumb on C4.

Left Hand: F2, G2, A2, Bb2, C3 (single notes, one to four per measure)

F position for the whole piece: pinky (5) on F2, ring (4) on G2, middle (3) on A2, index (2) on Bb2 and thumb (1) on C3. Mostly half notes on F2 and C3, with a quarter-note walk A2-Bb2-F2-C3 (3-2-5-1) before each cadence.

Notes Used in This Piece

Right Hand

Note	On the Staff	On the Keyboard	Finger
C4	Ledger line below treble staff	Middle C	Thumb (1)
D4	Just below treble staff	Between two black keys above C4	Index (2)
E4	First line of treble staff	Right of two black keys above C4	Index (2)
F4	First space of treble staff	Left of three black keys above C4	Middle (3)
G4	Second line of treble staff	Between black keys, right of F4	Thumb (1)
A4	Second space of treble staff	Between black keys, right of G4	Index (2)
Bb4	Middle line, flat in key signature	Black key just left of B4	Middle (3)
B4	Middle line, natural sign (m. 7)	White key just right of Bb4	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	Pinky (5)

Left Hand

Note	On the Staff	On the Keyboard	Finger
F2	Space below the bass staff	White key an octave below F3	Pinky (5)
G2	First line of bass staff	Between black keys, right of F2	Ring (4)
A2	First space of bass staff	Between black keys, right of G2	Middle (3)
Bb2	Second line, flat in key signature	Black key just left of B2	Index (2)
C3	Second space of bass staff	One octave below middle C	Thumb (1)

Section A - Verse 1 (Pickup and Measures 1-4)

Verse 1 of Austin's tune. Two eighth-note middle Cs lead to C4, F4, F4, F4, E4, F4. Measure 2 climbs G4-A4-Bb4-G4 to a dotted A4, and measure 3 reaches C5 and D5 before falling back to F4. The left hand alternates F2 and C3 in half notes, then walks A2-Bb2-F2-C3 into the cadence.

Allegro (♩ = 108)



The Twelve Days of Christmas - Section A - Verse 1

How to Practice This Section

Practice the hand move between measures 1 and 2: the thumb leaves middle C and lands on G4. Play the pickup and measure 1, stop, place the thumb on G4, then go on. Remove the stop once the move is sure.

Section B - Verse 5 (Measures 5-13)

After two bars of the opening, measure 7 jumps to forte for C5, a slurred D5 to B natural and a whole-note C5. Measures 9 and 10 are in 3/4: a falling line from C5 to F4, then Bb4, D4, F4. Measure 11 returns to 4/4 and steps down from G4 to middle C, and the closing cadence repeats measure 3.

Allegro (♩ = 108)



The Twelve Days of Christmas - Section B - Verse 5

How to Practice This Section

Clap and count measures 8-11 before playing them: four beats, three, three, four. Then play the right hand alone at half speed, watching for the B natural in measure 7 and the 5-1-3 hand shape in measure 10.

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. Pickup and measure 1: two eighth-note middle Cs with the thumb, then F4 with finger 3 and E4-F4 with 2-3
2. Measure 2: move the thumb to G4 and play G4-A4-Bb4-G4 with 1-2-3-1, then the dotted A4 and an eighth-note Bb4
3. Measures 3 and 12: C5 with 4, D5 with 5 slurred to Bb4 with 3, then A4-F4-G4 with 2-1-2 and a long F4 on the thumb
4. Measure 7: D5 with 5 slurred to B natural with 3; check the natural sign before you play
5. Measures 9-11: C5-Bb4-A4-G4-F4 on 5-4-3-2-1; during that F4, open the hand so the pinky takes Bb4 and the thumb is already over D4 (Bb4-D4-F4 on 5-1-3); at the breath, move one key down and play G4 to C4 on 5-4-3-2-1

Step 2: Left Hand Alone

1. F position: pinky on F2, 4 on G2, 3 on A2, 2 on Bb2, thumb on C3
2. Measures 1-2 and 5-6: half notes F2-C3, then C3-F2
3. Measures 3 and 12: quarter notes A2-Bb2-F2-C3 with 3-2-5-1, then a dotted-half F2
4. Measures 9-11: C3-A2-F2 in 3/4, a held Bb2, then C3 for three beats and F2 on beat 4

Step 3: Hands Together

1. Start at x0.5 in the player and count eighths aloud in measures 1-3
2. Loop measures 8-11 and say 1-2-3 in the two 3/4 bars
3. Play measures 7-8 louder (f) and return to mf at measure 9
4. Target: Allegro at 108 to the quarter, with the final F4 and F2 held under the fermata



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

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