

Lesson 2

Twinkle, twinkle little star - adding the bass accompaniment

I would like to point out that my version of this tune is different to the one in the tutor book which comes with the Elise concertina. In particular, my bass accompaniment is not the same as the one in the book and I actually think mine is a bit easier to play - especially for a beginner!

It's important that you are comfortable with the tune before you play this so don't move on to this until you are.

So what are we are trying to achieve with this bass part?

We are providing a simple accompaniment to the tune we have already learnt using the lower notes on the left hand side of the instrument.

We are starting from Bar 13 at the top of page 3. Please notice that the tune in the treble clef/upper stave is the same as we learnt in Bars 1-12 so we can concentrate on learning the bass notes in the lower clef.

Please notice where the notes in both staves coincide vertically - where they do, they are played simultaneously. All of the bass notes are played on either beat 1 or beat 3.

All of the notes in our bass part are minims (two beat notes) with their stems pointing downwards. Please remember to sustain all of these for two beats whilst playing the tune on the other side of the instrument. This will often mean holding on to a left-hand note whilst playing two notes in the right hand.

The Bass Clef

It's important to realise that notes in the bass clef are **not** the same as those in the

treble clef in terms of where they appear on the stave.

e.g. the fourth space of the treble clef is a note of E but...

the fourth space of the bass clef is a note of G.

This is because the bass clef is really a continuation of the treble clef. In fact the two are combined in something called the Grand Staff.

Look at the first two notes of bar 13 in the two clefs, on the two staves.

They are both Middle C. I showed you these notes in lesson 1. They are the same note, at the same pitch on different sides of the instrument.

On the right hand side, this C is on the 1st ledger line **below** the stave and is found on R1B1.

On the left hand side this C is on the 1st ledger line **above** the stave and is found on R3B2.

It's worth mentioning that notes on the left-hand side that are well above the stave are often written in the treble clef to avoid the use of multiple ledger lines which can be hard to read.

e.g. the top A on the left-hand side (R4B3) would be in the space above the third ledger line if you used the bass clef whereas in the treble clef it would be in the second space up which is much easier to read.

Don't worry as this won't be a problem with the bass part of this tune.

Let's get familiar with the four bass notes that we are going to play on the left hand side:

In descending order these notes are:

C (Middle C) R3B3 finger 3 (ring)
- on the 1st ledger line above the stave

B R2B4 finger 1 (index)
- in the space directly above the fifth line of the stave

A R2B3 finger 2 (middle)
- on the fifth line of the stave

G R2B2 finger 3 (ring)
- in the fourth space of the stave

Try playing them descending and then ascending until they "fall to the fingers" easily.

Don't forget about the bars that are repeated:

Bars 19 & 20 are the same as 17 & 18.

Bars 21 - 24 are the same as 13 - 16.

The pulling and pushing is the same as when you played just the single note tune.

Obviously playing two notes at the same time will use up more air so be aware of this.

*Remember to sustain the minims in the left hand for two beats while you play the notes in the right hand. Be especially careful when playing two crotchets in the right hand while playing a single minim in the left. As the bass note minim is sustaining, make sure that you pull (or push) smoothly and firmly so that there is no "break" in the note.

** In reality, you will probably "lift off" before you have completed a full two beats!*

Balance is a very difficult thing to achieve on this type of instrument as you cannot play some notes louder than others as the volume is dependent on the bellows.

Your audience, should you have one, may well be getting a different sound/balance to the one you (the player), are hearing. Nothing can be done about this, it's just the nature of the instrument.

When we play two (or more) notes simultaneously that sound nice, this is called "**harmony**".

Let's examine the bars one by one:

Bar 13

The two C notes at the start of the tune are both Middle C notes - this is called "**unison**".

The two G notes in the right hand played with the B note in the left is a harmony.

Bar 14

The two A notes in the right hand are an octave higher than the A note we play in the left - so this is also a type of unison.

The G note in the right hand played with the B note in the left is a repeat of the harmony we played in Bar 13.

Bar 15

The two F notes in the right hand played with the A in the left hand is a harmony.

The two E notes in the right hand played with the G in the left hand is a harmony.

Bar 16

The two D notes in the right hand played with the B in the left hand is a harmony.

On beat 3 of this bar we end with the two Middle C notes that we started the tune with.

Bar 17

The two G notes in the right hand played with the C in the left hand is a harmony. These notes are said to be a 5th apart (C, D, E, F, G)

The two F notes in the right hand played with the B in the left hand is a harmony.

Bar 18

The two E notes in the right hand played with the C in the left hand is a harmony.

The D note in the right hand played with the B in the left hand is a repeat of the harmony we played in Bar 16.

Remember:

Bars 19 & 20 are the same as 17 & 18.

Bars 21 - 24 are the same as 13 - 16.

As far as the left hand goes, (*apart from the repeats already mentioned*):

Bars 17,18,19 & 20 are all the same:
(C and B notes).

Try to memorise one hand and read the other. It's very hard to try and read and play the two staves simultaneously. If you can learn to play the tune without the music that's also fine. Just make sure that you have read the music correctly before setting it aside.

As with the right hand tune, notice how the Middle C note on the left hand (R3B2) is a little "south" of the G (R2B2). You use your 3rd finger on both notes.

Like I said in the first lesson, this "staggered" arrangement is to facilitate the easy construction of chords (*pressing down more than one button at a time*). I will deal with chords in a later lesson.