

# 24 Etudes Op. 1

## Kirill Monorosi

### PREFACE

The *24 Etudes* were inspired by and are dedicated to the wonderfully talented students of the *Rising Stars Program* (Open Academy of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music) – a program that fosters some of the most gifted young musicians in Australia. I am fortunate to be teaching for this program, as this means working alongside some of the finest musicians and teachers, and being able to observe and contribute to the development of the next generation of musicians in Australia. Coincidentally, the *24 Etudes* were completed in time to celebrate the tercentenary of the very first collection of pieces in every key: J. S. Bach's *Well-tempered Clavier* book 1 (1722). This collection that I know and love, having performed and recorded it, is without a doubt the single most important and influential set of pieces composed for a keyboard instrument. The incredible inventiveness, the melodic and harmonic language, as well as the musical logic demonstrated by Bach in this cycle influenced and inspired every composer that came after him. Countless other cycles, from Chopin's *Preludes* and *Etudes* to Shostakovich's *Preludes and Fugues* Op.87, as well as numerous works in other genres (e.g. Beethoven's late sonatas) owe a great deal to Bach's WTC. Throughout the *24 Etudes* I explore a number of pianistic and compositional techniques that go back to Bach (further details are given in the Notes at the back of the volume), and the central work (Etude No. 12) is a Fugue - an homage to Bach. The *24 Etudes* are arranged chromatically (again a nod to J. S. Bach and the WTC).

The genre of *Etude*, as well as the ages and level of the intended performers defined the scope, length and difficulty of the works in this opus. Although there is a gradation of difficulty between the etudes, they are suitable for pianists of an intermediate to advanced level (approximately Grade 5 to Diploma level), and are intended as stepping stones towards more advanced etudes by the great master composers. Some etudes are intentionally written to avoid large stretches making them suitable for smaller hands. While an etude is by nature a work that focuses on technique, as a student I disliked learning dry, purely technical pieces. It was therefore my goal in writing these etudes to present different techniques in an artistic way in order to make them more interesting to play than purely technical studies. The ways of doing this were varied, and included: writing a *cantabile* melody (e.g. Etude No. 22 in B-flat minor); an exciting, catchy rhythm (e.g. Etude No. 16 in G minor - *Tarantella*); interesting harmonic progressions, textures, or just focusing on the physical movement and making it into a kind of game (e.g., the constant exchange of repeated notes between hands in Etude No. 19 in A major).

Technical challenges are presented differently, some etudes stay focused on one technique, while others frame the technical problem with other musical material (e.g. No. 13 in F-sharp major). The etudes cover a broad range of styles and characters. The subtitle “inspired by” should not be understood as “in the style of” as they were not intended to copy the style of the composers—e.g. the first development of the Fugue “inspired by Bach” (Etude No. 12) is not in Bach's style at all—but are rather a reflection or echo of their music that stayed with me from the years of studying, playing and teaching their works. The *24 Etudes* are not a cycle, but rather a collection of pieces which can be played individually or combined into sets and performed in any order.

I hope the pieces in this collection will offer students an enjoyable way of improving their technique!

Kirill Monorosi  
Sydney  
November 2021

# NOTES

Notes on individual etudes, outlining some of the main ideas behind each work.

A brief background to the inspiration, as well as keys to the interpretation of each of the pieces is provided.

## No. 1 C major:

The technique explored here is the flexibility of the wrists, with a flowing up and down movement needed for every beat in both hands. It is important to avoid beat-heavy playing, focusing on achieving a sense of line in the melody.

**1.** *Allegro moderato*

*mf*

*Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped. simile*

The Etude is in ternary form (A 1-24; B 24-56; A<sub>1</sub> 56-68). A simple melodic line appears in the RH in both A sections and in the LH in the B section.

The etude builds towards the FOP (far out point), which is the key of F-sharp major (bars 37-40), and then works its way back to C major. The quavers in the melodic line are actually heard as crotchets due to the pedal, but releasing the melodic notes physically helps achieve a flowing motion and sense of freedom in the hands and arms.

*cresc.* *mp*

## No. 2 C minor:

Repeated notes or brief motives/figures in the lightest staccato and assigned a very fast tempo can be considered among Felix Mendelssohn's signature techniques.

inspired by F. Mendelssohn

Kirill Monorosi

**2.** *Presto*

*p sempre staccato e leggero*

This sort of writing can be found across his piano, chamber and orchestral works. This Mendelssohnian character inspired this etude. A *leggiero* touch, as well as transparency is required here.

Care should be taken not to tense up the LH in repeated chords (e.g. bars 33-40). Chords should be voiced to ensure the sound is focused. A brief respite is given in slurred notes and the two short slurred phrases.

**74** *mf dolce* *p*

*marcato il tenor* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.*

### No. 3 D-flat major:

The technique explored here is compound melody (a melodic line within figurations). Used brilliantly by J. S. Bach, especially in his music for solo violin and cello, the effect is sometimes called acoustic stream segregation as the ear divides one linear texture into two, perceiving a melody and figurations.

**Allegro** Kirill Monorosi

*mf*  
*leggero* *con Ped.*

Just like in the C major etude, when the sustaining pedal is used - some of the melodic lines are heard as crotchets, although they are notated as quavers (e.g. bars 2-4 RH).

*leg.* \* *leg.* \*

However, holding on to these notes would tense up the hand. A sense of lightness and humour due to the unpredictability (for the audience) in alternating the legato and staccato phrases gives this etude its character.

### No. 4 C-sharp minor:

This Etude is based on the interval (and thus hand-span) of a 7<sup>th</sup>, which appears in the RH on most beats between the melody and the lower note of the inner chords, and is resolved downwards into a 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Adagio** *cantabile e espressivo*

4. Theme *mf*

*leg.* \* *leg.* \* *leg.* \* *Ped. simile*

**Vivo e scherzando**

Var. 3 *mp*  
*sempre staccato*

3 3 3 3 2 3 4 1 2 3 5 3 2 1 3 1 2 3 5 3 3

Each variation also uses different techniques and ways of treating this melody, while the structure, phrasing and harmonies remain unaltered throughout.

The variations on the theme explore different characters (the Theme and Variation 1 are both lyrical in nature, while Var. 2 is virtuosic, and Var. 3 is energetic yet playful).

**Un poco più mosso**

Var. 1 *mf*

*Ped. simile*

**Allegro agitato**  
*non legato e poco leggero*

Var. 2 *f*

*con Ped. legato*

### No. 5 D major:

A study in imitation between hands and broken-chord texture.

The first section is imitative and the melodic motives in both hands do not coincide, thus the up- down- and after-beats need to be shaped by each hand separately.

*Allegro energico*

5.

*mf* *p* *mf* *mf* *p* *mf*

*simile*

5

This is a challenge in coordination which can be difficult for students.

41

A more challenging example can be found in bars 3 and 5 of J. S. Bach's F-sharp minor Prelude from the WTC I.

In fact, the idea for this etude came from exercises I improvised during a lesson as an illustration for mastering this difficulty while working through the Prelude with a student.

### No. 6 D minor:

A study in rhythm, this work is in Ternary form, focusing on staccato touch and rhythms (3 against 2) in the return of the A section.

*Vivo*

6.

*f*

*poco ritenuto* *a tempo* *ff*

25

*Tempo primo*

52

A sense of firm rhythmical energy, combined with playfulness in handling the rhythm is important here. The unexpected melodic line of the B section is also in a lyrical yet playful character.

### No. 7 E-flat major:

Just like in many of the preludes of Bach's WTC I (and the Chopin Etudes they inspired), this etude is based on a short melodic figure (in this case a descending broken chord) which is spun out (the technique is known as *fortspinnung*) to create a linear texture.

Allegretto scherzando

*mf* *leggero e secco*

Red. Red. Red. Red.

The image shows the first section of the etude. It consists of two staves. The right hand (RH) plays a descending broken chord figure in eighth notes, starting on G4 and descending to C4. The left hand (LH) plays a simple bass line with quarter notes. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto scherzando'. Dynamics include 'mf' and 'leggero e secco'. There are four 'Red.' markings under the LH notes.

The technical challenge here is achieving clarity and independence in fingers 3-4-5 in arpeggio texture, and building up endurance. Where possible, a more comfortable fingering should be used to avoid fatigue (it is suggested in the first section). A flexibility of the wrist is also developed here.

Practicing the chordal progression without the 1<sup>st</sup> note of each semiquaver group will clarify the harmonic progressions and thus aid memorisation.

Harmonically, this etude builds towards a FOP (far out point – here the key of E major in Bar 10), and then works its way back to the home key of E-flat major.

*ritenuto* *f*

*a tempo* *f*

The image shows the second section of the etude. It consists of two staves. The right hand (RH) plays a descending broken chord figure in eighth notes, starting on G4 and descending to C4. The left hand (LH) plays a simple bass line with quarter notes. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto scherzando'. Dynamics include 'mf' and 'leggero e secco'. There are four 'Red.' markings under the LH notes.

The LH legato and pedal in the first bar is contrasted with a secco staccato in the LH in bar 2. This pattern helps achieve a playful and somewhat mischievous character.

### No. 8 E-flat minor:

The sense of drama and turbulence in the outer sections of this etude contrasts with the calm and lyrical inner section.

Allegro con fuoco

*mf*

Red. Red.

The image shows the first section of the etude. It consists of two staves. The right hand (RH) plays a descending broken chord figure in eighth notes, starting on G4 and descending to C4. The left hand (LH) plays a simple bass line with quarter notes. The tempo is marked 'Allegro con fuoco'. Dynamics include 'mf'. There are two 'Red.' markings under the LH notes.

Andante cantabile  
*espress.*

*mp*

The image shows the second section of the etude. It consists of two staves. The right hand (RH) plays a descending broken chord figure in eighth notes, starting on G4 and descending to C4. The left hand (LH) plays a simple bass line with quarter notes. The tempo is marked 'Allegro con fuoco'. Dynamics include 'mf'. There are two 'Red.' markings under the LH notes.

This contrast is further highlighted through the key change and texture – chordal in the outer sections (the chords are presented in different ways) and several melodic layers in the inner section.

The melodic lines of the B section are a transformation of the melody of the A section.

### No. 9 E major:

A study in Arpeggios and hand-crossing. Contrast is created between the diatonic arpeggios and the chromatic interludes. A brilliant touch (achieved by playing the semiquavers articulated, slightly non-legato) will help make the passagework sparkle.

9. *Moderato*

*mf* RH LH

Red. \*

15 *cresc.* *leggiero* 8va

Sostenuto pedal

Red. \*

Sostenuto pedal on the two pedal points - the dominant B (bars 15-19) and the tonic E (bars 38-42) is needed to sustain the bass.

### No. 10 E minor:

A study for the LH. It is important to take the time to relax the LH in the breaks in the semiquaver passagework to allow for relaxation and aid in endurance. The rhythm is playful, and the melodic line features a hemiola through accents on the first, third and fifth quavers of the bar (as in 3/4 time).

10. *Allegro scherzando*

*mf* *leggiero*

Red. \*

This combination of times is also explored more extensively in the B-flat major etude (No. 21).

29 *f* *Red. \** *Red. \**

32 *p* *cresc.* *Red. simile*


*Red. legato e espressivo*

The form is ABAC(A<sup>1</sup>Coda) with very short sections that are only a single phrase long.


### No. 11 F major:

This study focuses on turns, leaps and rotation. It is based on a single melodic figure (the turn), which appears on the beat at the beginning, but from the cadenza onwards is changed to become an upbeat figure, creating more variety.

11.



To achieve the *Presto con brio* tempo in the final section, the small notes should be kept *leggiero*, and the main notes accented.



### No. 12 F minor – Fugue:

There are a number of precedents of fugues as etudes, beginning with A. Reicha, and C. Czerny, with perhaps better-known examples of fugues incorporated into a set of etudes by J. N. Hummel (his set of 24 Etudes Op. 125 contains a fugue), and Saint-Saëns' Etudes Op. 52 contain two Preludes and Fugues, and Etudes Op. 111 contains one).

This fugue has two subjects and is in 3 parts (or written for 3 voices). The fugue as a form is an example of musical economy, and this fugue is built entirely from several melodic ideas. The first section (bars 1-65) contains the exposition (1-41) and development (41-65) of the first subject.

inspired by J. S. Bach

12.



There are two episodes (bars 20-27 and 37-41) which are based on the quaver figure that concludes the subject. The development includes a sort of stretto of a truncated version of the main subject.

The second section (b. 65- 108) contains the exposition and episodes of the second subject. The entries of the voices in the exposition are in the reverse order of those in the first section and episodes are derived from a two-bar motive introduced in the bass of b.81.



The third section begins with a stretto combining both subjects in the minor dominant. In the following episode the episode motives of both sections appear in an alternating way, leading to the final stretto over the dominant pedal point with the voices re-stating the two subjects on the pitches in which they were first heard.

The fugue ends with the second episode motive superimposed on the ending of the first subject (which is simultaneously the episode motive) a combination which appears for the first time.



### No. 13 F-sharp major:

This study in thirds framed as a Sonata by D. Scarlatti.

Allegro Kirill Monorosi

*f*

The harmonic simplicity, rhythms and crossing of hands, as well as repeated phrases so typical of D. Scarlatti, work together to ensure a light and playful mood.

The homophonic texture, as well as the melodic and musical simplicity of this etude is in exact opposition to the density of the preceding Fugue.

*mf* *f*

### No. 14 F-sharp minor:

A study in cantabile playing of the outer sections, and virtuoso arpeggios/broken chord figurations in the inner sections.

Andante Kirill Monorosi

*p* *mf*

*tr* *Ped. simile*

The melody at the beginning is reminiscent of an accompanied solo for the cello, but is then taken down an octave, and the gentle chordal accompaniment is transformed into turbulent arpeggio figures, improving the strength, endurance and flexibility of the hand.

Allegro

*f* *Ped. simile*



### No. 15 G major:

The influence of Bach's figurative preludes of the WTC is again clearly seen in this etude, which is essentially a chorale-like melody in four parts, with the upper part ornamented by broken chord figurations.

Moderato

*mf cantabile*

6 6

Red. Red. Red. Red.

The main melodic line is comfortably placed in the Alto voice (played by the RH thumb). An extra fifth part appears in the tenor of bar 4 and other similar places, but this is only a visual aid to help the player define the melodic line. A free and flexible wrist will help comfortably reach all the notes within the broken chord figure.

*a tempo*

*mp cresc.*

It is important to maintain focus on the horizontal lines - each of the melodic parts. Careful and consistent voicing is needed to achieve a good dynamic balance between the parts.

*molto ritenuto*

*ff subito mf*

### No. 16 G minor – Tarantella:

This Etude is a favourite work of many of my students. Beginning with an introduction (bars 1-8), the main idea is then presented twice, first simply, and then in a more filled-in way.

Tarantella Kirill Monorosi

Vivo

16. *f sf*

*cresc.*

*ped. ped. simile*

*p leggiero*

Following this a bridge with a wind-down with a descending chromatic line which is immediately followed by an increase in intensity culminating in some dissonant chords. The A section returns again, firstly as normal, and then in a simple way, but this time with a low dark bass chord accompaniment. A brief Coda follows.

*cresc.*

Red. \* Red. \* Ped. simile

This is followed by a contrasting section featuring two-part writing, where both hands are involved in a conversation. Then a short bridge section returns us to the key of G minor and the A section. A short Fugato, actually only an exposition and an episode follows this in the Subdominant key of C minor, presenting a three-part texture. The piece is in a Rondo form: Introduction, A<sup>0</sup>, A<sup>1</sup>, B, A<sup>1</sup>, C, Bridge, A<sup>1</sup>, A<sup>0</sup>, Coda. A clear attack, good L/R balance and light touch in the LH figurations is important in this piece.

**For younger students**, a shorter version of this etude (without the more difficult C and Bridge sections (bars 42-80)) can be found in the Appendix.

### No. 17 A-flat major:

Naturally, a flat key was chosen for this work inspired by F. Liszt (Liszt seemed to prefer flat keys, with all *12 Transcendental Etudes*, the *Three concert Etudes* and numerous other works written in flat keys).

inspired by F. Liszt Kirill Monorosi

**17.** *Andante*

*mp* *con poco Ped.* *rubato* *accel.*

*tr.* *accel.* *rit.* *a tempo* *mp*

It is intended to bridge the gap both technically and musically, providing a stepping stone between easier studies (e.g. those by Czerny) and virtuoso Etudes (such as those by Liszt himself).

The etude features a number of Liszt's signature techniques, both technical and in terms of its composition. It is in ABA form with an extended cadenza/coda at the end and has a number of culminations, all building up to the final culmination in the coda, over a prolonged pedal point, but is monothematic (based on one theme), a nod to a technique favoured by Liszt.

*poco rit.* *a tempo* *ff dim.*

### No. 18 G-sharp minor:

Possibly the most difficult of the Etudes, this piece was inspired in part by the bell-like sonorities so often used by many Russian composers. The listener will not anticipate where this etude will take them as it has several unexpected turns. Beginning with a simple melodic line in the Bass, the first surprise is the humorous, chromatic lead up to the cadence in bar 8.

**Moderato**

*leggiere*

*p* *LH* *f* *sostenuto pedal* *Red. \**

The musical language of this bar is far from anything heard until then, but the music returns to "normal" until bar 16 when this cadence is repeated, with even more dissonance. The cadence is repeated two more times immediately after, modulating to and confirming the relative major.

*subito p* *Red. \**

A dreamy, lyrical descending passage follows with much pedal. Maintaining a focused sound and clarity is important here, and can be achieved by voicing the top notes. The development and build up begins in bar 24, modulating through a number of keys, to arrive at a climactic section of bell-like sonorities in the home key of G-sharp minor. The use of Sostenuto pedal helps maintain the bass as well as a clear texture.

A coda follows that returns us to the sound world of the beginning of the etude, but the stability and determination of the beginning is not there, rather a fragmented, searching ending.

### No. 19 A major:

A study in repetition. A sense of playfulness in alternating hands is a feature of this etude.

Coordination is quite difficult to achieve with leaps at the beginning, but the remainder of the etude is much easier.

**19.** *Allegro moderato* Kirill Monorosi

*mf*  
*leggero e secco*

*Red. \**

*Red. \**

### No. 20 A minor:

Based on Paganini's famous 24th Caprice, this work is a study in hand crossing and achieving accuracy in jumps.

Coordination is quite difficult to achieve with leaps at the beginning, but the remainder of the etude is much easier.

**20.** *Allegro moderato* Kirill Monorosi  
on a theme of Paganini

*RH*  
*LH*

*Ossia:*

*Red. \**

*RH*  
*LH*

*Ped. simile*

*Red. \**

### No. 21 B-flat major:

A waltz in mixed time.

Waltz

Kirill Monorosi

**21.** *Spirito* *rubato* *mf* *cresc.* *mp* *a tempo*

*leggiere e brillante*

*Ped. simile*

In the full version, it is essential to achieve a light and elegant touch, and maintain the correct accentuation in both hands.

A shorter and simpler version of this etude can be found in the Appendix (it is without the Waltz rhythm in the LH). Apart from being suitable for younger students, it can also be practiced before moving on to the “Waltz” version to ensure the RH accentuation is correctly established.

**21 b.** *leggiere e brillante*

*Ped. simile*

*Ped. simile*

### No. 22 B-flat minor:

A study in 6ths, it was inspired by the cantabile style of Chopin’s writing and his mercurial personality.

Kirill Monorosi

*Andante e rubato*

*mp*

*Ped. simile*

The sudden change to humorous and lighthearted character in the middle section is accentuated by quoting Chopin’s turn and trills in the LH.

*mp*

*Ped. simile*

*poco scherzando e accelerando*

*p*

*cresc.*

However, the piece returns to the original somber mood, and the *morendo* (dying away) ending is highlighted by whole bar rests and an ending on a fermata over a rest, which comes after a last, single note.

*morendo*

*p*

*ppp*

### No. 23 B major:

The calm, peaceful (almost static) character of the beginning makes way to a more active middle section which takes us to the parallel minor key. The peaceful section returns and an extra melodic line appears in the LH.

Andante piacevole Kirill Monorosi

*Sra*  
*mf*  
*pp*  
*con Ped.*

The trills in this etude should be kept very light, while the melodic line is clearly projected.

*cresc.*  
1 2 3

### No. 24 B minor:

Focusing on the extension and contraction of the hand, this etude presents the initial idea in each hand individually, and then combines them in both hands.

Allegro

*p*  
*mp*  
Ped. \* Ped. \* Ped. \* Ped. simile

*Sub.*

The finale should be played as fast as possible while maintaining clarity and brilliance in the finger attack.

*poco ritenuto*

*Sub.*

**Presto possibile**

*leggiero*

*leggiero*  
7

Students of the Rising Stars Program (Open Academy of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music) gave a premiere performance of these works. This concert can be heard on YouTube:

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLSFHNq95NCPlk5rAo9jCAIqFxd0-3VVj4>



Kirill Monorosi

**To order the Etudes:**

**In Asia:**

To order a copy, E-mail: [kirill.monorosi@sydney.edu.au](mailto:kirill.monorosi@sydney.edu.au) with your postal address.

**In Europe and USA and Latin-Amerika:**

To order a copy, E-mail: [bach@thebachproject.de](mailto:bach@thebachproject.de) with your postal address.

Cost + postage costs (Shipping via postal service) - please ask for this via E-Mail. Thanks.

**A copy will be sent upon the presentation of receipt of payment (through bank transfer or Paypal).**

© 2021 La Folia Music Publications, Sydney All rights reserved Printed in Australia

LFMP: 028

ISMN: 979-0-720131-27-6