

Part II of *Pearls of the Master: Words of Advice* from Marcel Moyse

From Notes at Class in Brattleboro, VT in May 1977

by Jerrold Pritchard

Marcel Moyse on his “24 Petite Etudes Mélodiques”

Although he heard students in the master class play prepared solo works, much of the time in his workshops was spent imparting some basic musical principles found in his deceptively simple little melodic etudes. Students might play one or more of these studies prior to playing a larger, solo piece. He told the story of writing the “24 Little Melodic Etudes” after a new beginning after his long layoff from illness: Each needs a commentary. They are simple in style, but written for expression.

Each of these studies was designed to emphasize or bring out some musical gesture and technical or interpretive problem. Not all the etudes were played or worked on the class. Again, other members of the class may have heard something different or interpreted his work another way, but these following comments capture the essence of how Moyse expected you to play these etudes.

No 1. Andante. Sad. Build—more insistence on each repetition

1st Variation: Like a piano with the pedal down. Each note bell like with a slight diminuendo.

24 LITTLE MELODIC STUDIES

WITH VARIATIONS (EASY)
for flute

MARCEL MOYSE

The image shows the musical notation for the first study and its variation. The first study is in 4/4 time, marked 'Andante', and consists of two staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The melody starts on a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The dynamics are marked *pp*, *p*, *p*, *mf*, *mf*, and *cresc.*. The second staff continues the melody with quarter notes D5, E5, F5, and G5, followed by quarter notes F5, E5, D5, and C5. The variation is also in 4/4 time, marked 'Andante', and consists of two staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The melody is a continuous eighth-note pattern: G4-A4-B4-C5-D5-E5-F5-G5. The dynamics are marked *pp*, *p*, *p*, *mf*, and *mf*, with a *cresc.* marking at the end. The second staff continues the pattern with quarter notes G5, F5, E5, D5, quarter notes C5, B4, A4, G4, quarter notes F4, E4, D4, C4, and quarter notes B3, A3, G3, F3.

No. 2. *Andantino*. Happy, Pleasant. A little faster.

Making the octave leap downward on from middle E to low E – Yawn.

Andantino
2 *p* *cresc.* *mf* *cresc.*

Andante
Variazione *p* *cresc.* *mf*

No. 3. *Allegretto*. Dance like. Sustain the second note. More life and excitement.

Allegretto
3 *p* *cresc.*

Allegretto
1: Variazione *p* *cresc.*

No. 4. *Andantino*. Like the style of Taki's "Lune sur le château ruiné." (Moon Over the Ruined Castle). Sing! Articulate like a piano: light, clean, but resonant. Gold!

Andantino
4 *p* *cresc.*

p *mf*

No. 4. Variation. Bring out the accented first note of the two-note slur. Use **Martellé articulation**: the tongue makes a small hole between the lips and pulls back to make a sudden release of the air with a “pop”--like a removing a champagne cork.”



No. 5. Allegro. Happy, skipping, like a boy who gets to school to find it closed for holiday: “Hurrah, I have no school today!” **No. 5. Variation.** Happier still: “Two boys on vacation!”



No. 6. *Andante*. Sad. “Think about the sadness of Mother Mary.”

No. 7. *Allegro*. Not too fast. To develop a Rich Tone: Add Vitamin C to the tone! Use a Full Tone: “Bring your tone by the bucket full.”

No. 8. Andante. To develop a strong Eb, with good pitch and fullness. Pay strict attention to the dynamics. Play them exactly where notated on the page. **No.8. 1st variation:** Keep the melody prominent. **No. 8. 2nd variation:** Clown-like.



No. 9. *Andantino*. Forward movement. Hold the first note of the figure (a double dotted 16th) full value. Sing out. Make the quick 32nd note with a rebound of the tongue. Contrast the full singing quality of the double dotted 16th with a dry, quick 32 note.

1st variation: Diminuendo quickly on each two-note group of 8th notes, but always sustain the 2nd note, don't chop it off with tongue ending the note.

No. 10. *Lento Martellato e sostenuto*. Big, heavy, serious.



No. 10. 1st variation: Keep blowing with air pressure behind the tongue with a light, sustained tone.

No. 11. *Lento*. Full, open. Lips supple and relaxed. Don't try to play loud. Let it happen; don't make it happen.

No. 11. 2nd Section. Two-note slurs with diminuendo: Crying, sobbing. Like a professional mourner.



No. 11. Variation: *Andantino*. Expansive. Let the line build.

No. 12. *Allegretto*. Like a spinning carousel. Make the first eighth note of each measure a little longer and like a bass drum. The rest of the eighth notes in the measure are like a cymbal. Boom-plop, Boom-plop, Boom-plop. Like a circus juggler: watch for the fall of the ball.

No. 13. *Lento e ben legato*. For control and equality of sound in this key. Light, French; like the Bizet's "Entr'acte" from Carmen. Keep the Resonance all the way to the bottom. "Fishing the bottom of the sound."

No. 13. 2nd section. Make the octave leaps emerge from the bottom note. [The listener should desire to hear the top note evolve from the overtone spectrum of the lower note.] Watch the pitch of the slight diminuendo at the end of each two-bar phrase. Don't go flat.

No. 13. 3rd section. Be flexible to make the big leaps down and upward. Try also practicing for sudden dynamic contrast in each group of four eighth notes; perhaps 3 notes loud and one soft, or 3 soft and one loud.

No. 14. *Allegro*. With a lilt. 3/4 in one to the bar. Full, but open quality. Beware up to keep pitch of E# and F# close together. Look out for the A#, the second to last note: It is often flat.

No. 15. *Allegro*. Open quality of sound even though staccato. Make the triplets light, short, and lively. [Martellé?] Show the downbeat and the climax of the motif.

1st Variation. A ballet dance for a ballerina. Imagine a two-note accompaniment of eighth notes: boom-plop. [long-short, loud-soft]

2nd Variation. Heaver. A male dancer! Note the contrary style of accentuation of the short note on the downbeat. Don't let down the intensity in the 2nd half of this variation.

No. 16 [Not played or no comments]

No. 17. *Allegro vivo*. Insistent: "I WANT my money!" Make the chromatic line go to the top note. Notice the hidden octave interval between the first and last note of the each measure. Make a good diminuendo to pianissimo in the last measure. Let it say: "Goodbye!"

17 *Allegro vivo*
f e sostenuto

[No comments on Number 18, 19, 20, 21]

Number 22. *Allegro moderato*. Breath before the syncopated note.

1st Variation. Think of a background of four even eighth notes on a snare drum as the accompaniment.

The image shows a musical score for Number 22, titled "Allegro moderato". It consists of three staves of music in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The first staff is the main melody, starting with a piano (p) dynamic. The second and third staves are labeled "1^a Variazione" and feature a complex rhythmic pattern with many triplets (indicated by a '3' over the notes) and syncopated rhythms. The music is written in a style typical of 20th-century etudes.

[No comments on Number 23 and 24]

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Moyses quotes compiled by Jerrold Pritchard 2010

Musical samples from Moyses - 24 Small Melodic Etudes – Alphonse Leduc