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Applied Music Theory

The Londonderry Air is a 17th-century Irish folk melody. It has been put to song with countless lyrics, including the highly popular *Danny Boy*, penned in 1913. The plaintive melody, often played on bagpipes, has been heard at the memorial service of John F. Kennedy and at ceremonies honoring heroic police officers and firefighters.

Directions

- First play the melody alone, carefully observing the fingering.
- Then add L.H. **blocked chords** on *beat 1* of each measure, as indicated by the chord symbols. (See next page.)

Notice there is no chord on the opening *upbeats*.

The Londonderry Air

Key of F Major
Lead Sheet

Traditional

Moderato

1 *mp* F B \flat

5 (repeat B \flat) *mf* F C7


9 (repeat C7 chord) *mp* F B \flat

13 F C7 F B \flat F

*Release the L.H. thumb (of the B \flat chord) for the melody note D.

The Russian composer Rimsky-Korsakov penned this theme for his orchestral work *Scheherazade*. The composer took his inspiration from an exotic tale of a young woman named Scheherazade, as told in *The Arabian Nights*.

Arpeggiated (rolled) chord
 Play the notes quickly, from bottom to top.
 Use a slight upward motion of the wrist.



Theme from Scheherazade

Key of ___ Major

Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov
 (1844–1908, Russia)
arranged

Allegretto*



**Allegretto*—cheerful; rather fast (a tempo mark between *Moderato* and *Allegro*)

Theory of Minor Scales

A piece in a **minor key** may sound mysterious, sad, or dark.

A piece in a **major key** generally has a brighter quality.

Relative Minor Key

Every *major* key also has a *minor* key that shares the same key signature.

This minor key is called the **relative minor** because it is related by key signature.

To find the relative minor scale, start on **scale degree 6** of the major scale.

C major scale

6th scale degree

half step

half step

scale degrees: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (1)

tonic dominant

A natural minor scale

half step

half step

scale degrees: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (1)

tonic dominant

Playing and Listening

- Play the **C major scale** above and listen to the sound.
The major scale has half steps between *scale degrees* 3–4 and 7–8.
- Now play the **A natural minor scale** (the relative minor scale).
Listen to the difference in sound. The natural minor scale has half steps between *scale degrees* 2–3 and 5–6.

Notice that the natural minor scale uses only notes from the relative major scale.

3-Minute Technique

Hand Shape Warm-up

- Open your R.H. with the palm facing up. Bring your fingertips and thumb together. Notice your *cupped* hand.



- Turn your hand over and look for **tall knuckles**. Repeat with the L.H.



Technique Hints

- Look for a “tall knuckle” for **finger 3**. Play the thumb *lightly*, perched on the side tip.
- Listen for even triplets that “ripple” up and down the **A natural minor scale**.

Rippling Triplets

(for R.H.)

Allegro

p *mf*

Rippling Triplets

(for L.H.)

Allegro

p *mf*