

January

Sample Score & Lesson

FROM **DAS JAHR EASY PIANO** ARRANGED BY HENSELPUSHERS

Thank you for downloading this free sample. In this document you'll find an easy arrangement of the first of thirteen pieces that make up Fanny Hensel's cycle *Das Jahr*, plus an accompanying lesson. These selections are from HenselPushers' first books, available for purchase at henselpushers.org/store

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel (1805-1847) was a prolific and inventive composer and the center of Berlin's music scene in her day. She composed over 450 works in her lifetime. *Das Jahr* ("The Year", 1841) is a groundbreaking cycle of twelve thematically and harmonically interlocked character pieces depicting the twelve months of the year. This technically demanding, nearly hour-long suite was Hensel's largest work for the piano, and arguably the greatest of her hundreds of compositions.

In order to make this incredible work accessible for pianists of a broader range of levels and experience, HenselPushers has arranged *Das Jahr* at an easy piano level, preserving the character and theme of each piece. HenselPushers' companion lesson book offers lessons on technique and performance to support pianists as they learn to play each piece.

This arrangement exists because pianists of all levels deserve access to the musical ideas of this brilliant and innovative composer. Likewise, pianists of all levels should be empowered to develop their own readings of her works, and recognize the value inherent in their unique interpretations.



HenselPushers exists to make Fanny Hensel's compositions more accessible and encourage musicians to explore their own musicality as they engage with Hensel's works. HenselPushers' primary project is creating free PDF engravings of Hensel's scores and hosting directories of all of Hensel's compositions with links to free downloadable scores.

If you'd like the rest of the *Das Jahr Easy Piano* cycle, you can purchase print copies of the music and lesson book in a large, easy to read format at henselpushers.org/store

Best wishes for 2022,
HenselPushers

January

Adagio, quasi una Fantasia

The musical score is presented in five systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first system (measures 1-6) is in 4/4 time, marked *pp*. The second system (measures 7-11) is in 4/4 time, marked *p*, and includes a *8va* marking above the treble staff. The third system (measures 12-16) is in 6/8 time, marked *mp*. The fourth system (measures 17-20) is in 6/8 time, marked *mf*. The fifth system (measures 21-24) is in 6/8 time. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

25

29

32




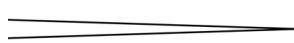


34

37

January

Dreams & Beginnings

Musical Terms & Symbols

	<i>Adagio</i> : slow and stately tempo, “at ease”, around 66-76 bpm; <i>quasi una fantasia</i> : translates to “like a dream” or “like a fantasy”
	<i>Ottava</i> (octave); play these notes an octave higher than written
	<i>Fermata</i> ; hold this note longer than the notated value
	<i>Diminuendo</i> ; getting softer/decreasing volume
	<i>Staccato</i> (detached); separate note from nearby notes
	Substitute finger; switch fingers while holding down note

Walkthrough

The tempo of this piece is slow: *Adagio, quasi una Fantasia*. The phrase *quasi una Fantasia* translates to “like a dream”, a theme which is expressed musically in several ways in the piece. Although there are no sharps or flats in the key signature, there are many accidentals (both sharps and flats) throughout the piece, which give it an unsteady, changing, dreamlike sound.

The piece begins in 4/4 time. For the first two lines, the left hand is low on the keyboard, and the right hand high—played an octave above where it is written (8va) for a couple measures in line 2. These opening measures are soft (*pp* and *p*).

Then the piece switches to 6/8 time, where a dotted quarter note has the same duration that a quarter note had in the 4/4 section. This middle section is a little louder: *mp*, growing to *mf*, then subsiding back to *mp*. In measure 28, the left hand is briefly written in treble clef.

The piece returns to 4/4 time for the last three lines. These shifts in time are another feature of this piece that evokes dreams, where time can be disjointed or illusory. In this last section, the dynamics soften back down to *p*, and the left hand is written in the treble clef for a few measures (measures 35-37). The piece ends with a big dynamic swing: *f* diminishing to *p*, as both hands descend into the bass clef (measures 38-40).

LOOK OUT FOR:

- Change in time signature, twice! (see exercise 1)
- Finger substitution in measure 38 (see exercise 3).
- Lots of accidentals.
- RH written 8va in measures 7-9.

Exercises

1. CHANGING TIME SIGNATURES

This piece begins and ends in 4/4 time, and the middle of the piece is in 6/8.

This means you will need to shift from 4/4 to 6/8 and from 6/8 to 4/4.

The value of a quarter note in 4/4 = the value of a dotted quarter note (or three eighth notes) in 6/8.

First practice by tapping the rhythm below while switching between 6/8 and 4/4 time.

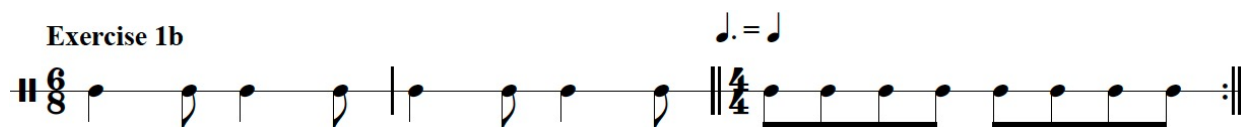
Hint: every note below should have the same duration.

Exercise 1a



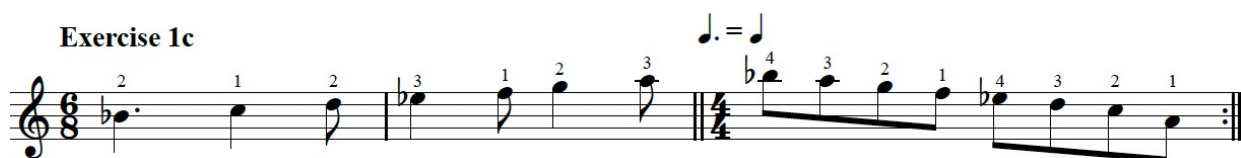
Now that you have the feel of switching time signatures, try tapping this slightly more complicated rhythm:

Exercise 1b



With the **right hand**, play the B^b Major scale below while switching between 6/8 and 4/4 time:

Exercise 1c



Practice switching from 6/8 to 4/4 in this excerpt from *January*. Practice hands separately at first.

Exercise 1d



2. DESCENDING BLOCK CHORDS IN THE LEFT HAND

Smoothly playing three- or four-note block chords is challenging, especially in the left hand.

Practice by building the chords one note at a time (exercise 2a).

-Use the suggested fingering to get familiar with the path of each finger through the progression.

-Notice that the **left hand** is in treble clef.

Exercise 2a

Exercise 2a consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff is in treble clef and the second is in bass clef. The first staff contains five measures of descending block chords, each with a single finger (1) indicated below. The second staff contains five measures of descending block chords, each with two fingers (1, 2) indicated below. The chords are: C4-E4-G4, B3-D4-F4, A3-C4-E4, G3-B3-D4, and F3-A3-C4.

When the left hand is confident, try adding the right hand in this modified excerpt from *January*:

Exercise 2b

Exercise 2b is a modified excerpt from *January* in 4/4 time. The right hand plays a simple melody of quarter notes: C4, E4, G4, B3, A3, G4, F4, E4. The left hand plays descending block chords: C4-E4-G4, B3-D4-F4, A3-C4-E4, G3-B3-D4, and F3-A3-C4. Fingerings are indicated below the notes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 for the right hand and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 for the left hand.

3. FINGER SUBSTITUTION

In some cases, you will want to change fingers while holding down a particular key. This allows the hand to change positions and prepare for upcoming notes while keeping the note sustained.

This is easiest to do on a note with a longer duration because you have more time to substitute fingers and reposition the hand.

Practice finger substitutions (exercise 3a, **right hand**):

1. Press down the key with the finger indicated by the first number (3rd finger in this exercise)
2. Place the finger indicated by the second number on the same key (5th finger in this exercise)
3. Move the original finger off the key and position the hand to prepare for upcoming notes

Exercise 3a



After you are comfortable switching between the 3rd and 5th fingers of the right hand, try it out with the left hand, and with different combinations of starting and ending fingers.

Are there fingers which are relatively harder or easier to substitute? Why?

Now you can practice the finger substitution in *January*:

Exercise 3b

Ideas for Interpretation & Performance

- * This piece is the beginning of the *Das Jahr* cycle, and it represents January, the beginning of the year. How do you feel about beginnings? In what way can you express those feelings in this piece?
- * What are some aspects of dreams that differ from reality? How might those characteristics of dreams be reflected in this piece?
- * If this piece were describing a dream, what happens in the dream?