

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

Lesson Notes

This is probably one of the easiest tunes that has ever been written so it's an ideal piece to try first of all on the melodeon.

If you look at the sheet music, the right hand notes are written as musical notes on the stave and the left hand bass notes and chords are written on top of the stave as letters - capitals for the bass notes and lower case for the chords. Please refer to my instructional sheets that I have provided to help you to read musical notation.

With your instrument correctly attached to your body by means of one or two straps, the side of the instrument with more buttons should be on your right from your point of view (as you look down).

The lever or button near the big left hand strap is the air button. Although you probably won't need it in this tune, make sure you can operate it with your left thumb should you need to.

Let's learn the tune first. This is played on the buttons which you can see on the right hand side of the instrument. Make sure that you undo any straps which are keeping the bellows closed and open the bellows out a little way by operating the air button and applying pressure to the left hand strap. You don't need to open the bellows all the way!

Position the first three fingers of your right hand on three adjacent buttons of the inside row (nearest the bellows). This is called the G row because almost all the notes on this row are found in the scale of G major. (*On some melodeons, all of the notes on this row are found in the scale of G major.*) All six notes that you need for this tune are found on either buttons three, four and five or buttons four, five and six depending on your instrument. You count down from the chin end.

Compare your notes with mine in the video and you will soon see which are the right ones. Each right hand button gives you a different note depending on whether you are pushing or pulling the bellows. When you push the bellows you are expelling air and when you pull, you are allowing air in.

Bar 1 - The first note is G. This note is either on the third button down inside row or the fourth. Press this button with the index finger of your right hand and push gently on the left side of the instrument so that the bellows begin to close. This note is said to be "on the push". *Bellows directions are written underneath each bar.*

Whilst continuing to push, press the same button. You have now played the first two notes of the tune "Twin-
kle". Still pushing, press the button "two-down" from the first one you played. Use your third finger. Do this twice and you will have played the next two notes of the tune which are both D - "twin-
kle".

Bar 2 - Now, press this same button twice more but reverse the direction of the bellows. These notes are said to be "on the pull". These notes are both E. "lit-
tle". Once again, reverse the direction of the bellows (push) whilst pressing the same button to sound the D note again. Hold this note for two beats - "star". You have now played the first two bars of the tune.

Bar 3 - "How I wonder" - press the button twice that your 2nd finger should be lined up on as you pull and this will give you two C notes and then press this same button twice more but pushing and you will hear two B notes.

Bar 4 - "what you are" - Press the button twice that you first used at the start of the tune (use index finger) but this time whilst pulling and you will hear two A notes. Then press the same button whilst pushing and you will hear the G note again - hold this note for two beats.

Bar 5 - "Up above the" - Two push notes and two pull. Finger three for the D notes and finger two for the C notes.

Bar 6 - "world so high" - Two B notes, finger two on the push and an A note, finger one on the pull, held for two beats.

Bars 7 and 8 = Bars 5 and 6 just with different words.

Bars 9 - 12 = Bars 1-4.

Keep practising this until you can confidently play the whole tune slowly. Push and pull gently on the bellows. You don't need to move them much to sound the notes. The volume of the instrument is dependent upon how you operate the bellows not how hard you press the buttons!.

Let's add the left hand now.

Bar 1 - You can see G g G g lined up perfectly with the notes on the stave. Try using your left hand little finger on the lowest button (nearest the floor) on the outside row of the left hand side as you push the bellows. This is the bass note G. We call the sound that this makes "oom". Now, whilst still pushing, press the button above this, same row, with your third finger and you should hear the g chord. ("pah") You may find these two fingers difficult to use but try to persevere with them.

Having said this, many fine players only use two or three fingers to play the bass buttons and thus avoid the use of the little finger. Time will tell what is right for you. With my method, you've always got four fingers lined up with the four buttons of each row, so it's very logical.

Ok, now play the first bar using both hands. Remember, it's all on the push. The bass notes are played with the first and third notes of the bar and the bass chords are played with the second and fourth notes of the bar.

Bar 2 - The two lowest left hand buttons on the inside row give you a C bass note and a c chord on the push *and* on the pull. In this tune we are always pulling when we press these buttons. Again, try and use the little finger on the C bass note - button 4 - and the third finger on the c chord - button 3. Notice how the G bass note and g chord are played whilst the right hand D note is sustaining for two beats.

Bar 3 - same basses as Bar 2.

Bar 4 - Press the same buttons that you did for the G bass note and g chords but pull the bellows. In this way you will hear a D bass note and a d chord instead.

Carry on in this way for the rest of the tune.

On the very last right hand note of the piece you play a G bass note and a g chord at the same time to end the tune. Hold these basses for the two beats that the right hand G note sustains for.

Play this tune very slowly at first. Don't play faster than you can think. Gradually increase the speed over time. Don't practise for too long as you may end up with some aches and pains. "Little and often" is better!! Have plenty of breaks.

Make sure that you are sitting comfortably and that your straps are adjusted properly.