

E N G L I S H C O N C E R T I N A

"The English Concertina is an Instrument, which possessing the combined qualifications of most other Instruments, can also be made to produce effects which are exclusively its own. Capable of the greatest rapidity of execution, it is nevertheless susceptible of every variety of harmony, of the crescendo, the diminuendo, and the tremolo, the latter having hitherto been confined to Instruments which are played with the bow."

Giulio Regondi
(1832 - 1871)

Regondi's remarks, written about 100 years ago, still apply and in addition we now have the benefit of those years' experience in both the manufacture of the concertina and of playing. Concertina players are now to be found in every country and therefore the instrument is used for expressing the varied types of music with equal efficiency.

The popularity of the concertina has been maintained by its versatile possibilities, ease of handling and portability.

I hope that you will derive many hours of pleasure whilst learning to play and I am sure that when you have mastered the rudiments you will find that you will, with practice, play the music of your ambition.

I have, for the purpose of this Course, assumed that you have moderate knowledge of music and of musical terms. If you have not, I suggest that you acquire an elementary book on the rudiments of music and study it in conjunction with this Course.

If at any time during this Course you feel that you would like further explanation on a certain point please do not fail to write to me.

Harry Minting.

Playing Position

As with all musical instruments, the most efficient is the most comfortable position and the following points will help to attain this :

Sit on a chair or stool which enables the feet to reach the floor comfortably. The part of the leg between the hip and the knee will then form a parallel rest for the concertina and therefore minimise the assistance necessary in keeping it stationary.

The thumb straps should be adjusted so that the thumb fits into the strap and grips the thumb joint tight enough to avoid slipping but loose enough for the thumb to be released without pulling.

The tip of the little finger should rest loosely in the finger rest and slide in the rest according to the position of the hand when ascending or descending over the keyboard.

The left underneath side of the concertina, parallel with the finger rest, must be the side which is placed on the left knee. The action of the bellows is controlled by the right hand. The left hand side should be kept upright and stationary.

The Action of the Bellows

To produce notes of even quality the bellows must be drawn out with a steady movement to its full extent and pressed back again with no more pressure than is necessary to make the notes sound.

The student should practise all the exercises with a slow movement of the bellows. Quicker movement and, therefore, louder notes can be used when conversant with the keyboard and control of the bellows has been attained.

Fingering

Start practising with the first, second and third fingers touching the tops of the keys and confine the movement of the fingers to the pressure of the particular key being played. Later, it will be necessary to exaggerate the finger movement for playing staccato passages but, even then, too much movement should be avoided.

Note: Concertina fingering is marked: THUMB, 1, 2, 3, 4.

General

Single notes should never be played too loudly as this tends to flatten the notes.

Never practise "forte".

The characteristic tone of the concertina is best acquired by a delicate and flexible method of playing. Never force the instrument to gain loud notes; it is better to use octaves but, even then, care should be taken to minimise the strain on the reeds to maintain true notes.

"Do's" and "Don'ts" to be remembered

Do keep your instrument clean and dry.

Do follow the instructions contained in these lessons.

Do replace your concertina in its case when not in use.

Don't open or close the bellows without either releasing the air valve (if your instrument is fitted with an air valve) or playing some keys. You will otherwise place unnecessary strain on the internal mechanism and encourage air leaks.

First Lesson

It will be seen from the diagram of the keyboard that with relation to the position of the hand the first finger falls naturally over the second row of keys.

Place the first finger of the left hand on "C" (the lowest note in the second row) and the second finger on "E" in the third row.

Now Play Exercise No. 1.

Place the first finger of the right hand on "D", which is the key immediately above the lowest note ("G") and the second finger on "F".

Now Play Exercise No. 2.

Having played the above two exercises a few times, you should now be prepared to practise exercises 3, 4 and 5. Be careful to follow the fingering as marked.

Repeat these five exercises until the notes can be played with regular tone and easy movement of the fingers.

Remember to keep the action of the bellows steady and avoid any tendency to produce an increase in the tone of the note after the note has been struck.

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EXERCISE NO. 1

FINGERING

A musical staff in treble clef with a common time signature. It contains eight measures of music, each with a single note. The notes are: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 1), C5 (finger 2), B4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), G4 (finger 1), and F4 (finger 2). The notes are connected by a horizontal line.

The
HARRY MINTING
 Concertina School

EXERCISE NO. 2.

A musical staff in treble clef with a common time signature. It contains eight measures of music, each with a single note. The notes are: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 1), C5 (finger 2), B4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), G4 (finger 1), and F4 (finger 2). The notes are connected by a horizontal line.

An empty musical staff in treble clef with a common time signature.

EXERCISE NO. 3.

A musical staff in treble clef with a common time signature. It contains twelve measures of music, each with a single note. The notes are: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 1), B4 (finger 2), C5 (finger 2), B4 (finger 2), A4 (finger 1), G4 (finger 1), F4 (finger 1), E4 (finger 2), D4 (finger 2), C4 (finger 2), and B3 (finger 1). The notes are connected by a horizontal line.

An empty musical staff in treble clef with a common time signature.

EXERCISE NO. 4.

A musical staff in treble clef with a common time signature. It contains twelve measures of music, each with a single note. The notes are: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 1), C5 (finger 2), B4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 2), G4 (finger 1), F4 (finger 2), E4 (finger 1), D4 (finger 2), C4 (finger 1), and B3 (finger 2). The notes are connected by a horizontal line.

An empty musical staff in treble clef with a common time signature.

EXERCISE NO. 5.

A musical staff in treble clef with a common time signature. It contains twelve measures of music, each with a single note. The notes are: G4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 1), B4 (finger 2), C5 (finger 2), B4 (finger 2), A4 (finger 1), G4 (finger 1), F4 (finger 2), E4 (finger 1), D4 (finger 2), C4 (finger 1), and B3 (finger 2). The notes are connected by a horizontal line.