

Flower Duet



Composer: Clément Philibert Léo Delibes
Nationality: French
Source/Date: *Lakmé* (1883)

The 'Flower Duet' is a vocal duet for soprano and mezzo-soprano written by French composer Léo Delibes. The piece is taken from his 1883 opera *Lakmé*, which continues to be one of his most successful works, and still a popular concert piece to this day. 'Flower Duet' has more recently become more widely recognised through its use in television adverts and films, including a 1980s commercial by British Airways.

As a composer, Delibes primarily wrote works for stage, and wrote several operas and ballets. While *Lakmé* remains a highly popular work, Delibes also gained great critical acclaim for his ballets, which are widely regarded as an influence on the composition of modern ballets, including works by Debussy, Ravel and Stravinsky.

Performance Notes



It can be a challenge to maintain good intonation when playing in A major. Pay particular attention to the pitch of the sharpened notes on the D string, and be sure to bring the third finger back for the natural notes on the A and E strings.

This piece demands a variety of bowing approaches to achieve a convincing and expressive performance:

- Bars 1 and 2: Your bow strokes need to be very light and free-moving, allowing for less of an abrupt *staccato* and more of a 'lifted' effect on the last notes in each of these bars.
- Bars 3-5: Be sure to reserve your bow for the paired slurs, but by contrast you can use a whole bow for each beat in bar 4, with a focus on a gentle but swift re-take into bar 5.
- Bars 9-11: Make sure the bow is firmly in contact with the string before engaging with the up-bow entries, and make sure you mark the dynamic contrasts in these bars (*mf* - *mp* - *mf*)
- Bars 13 and 14: Use as much bow as you can to achieve a rich tone in these bars, ensuring a *forte* dynamic.

This piece is from the romantic era of classical music, and as such you should try to put as much expression into your performance as possible. Be sure to listen to recordings of performances of this famous work to inspire your own ideas.

Audio Access

Audio for this book can be accessed via the **QR code** on the right (*requires a compatible smartphone or tablet*) or by using the **URL and download code** shown on page 5.



Flower Duet

from *Lakmé*

By Léo Delibes

Andantino con molto ♩ = 100

4 *mp*

8 *mf* *mp*

11 *mf* *poco cresc.* *f*

15 *mp*

19 *dim.* *p* *poco rall.* *a tempo*

23 *rall.*

Technical Exercises

There are three groups of technical exercises at Grade 3:

- Group A: Scales
- Group B: Arpeggios
- Group C: Technical Studies

For groups A and B, the examiner will request a selection from each group to be performed. For group C, you may choose **one** technical study to perform from the three listed in the grade book.

Group A: Scales

All scales must be played:

- Unaccompanied (recommended minimum tempo: ♩=65)
- Ascending and descending across the number of octaves as shown for each example

Major and minor scales:

- Must be played with separate bows, **or** slurred with two **or** four quavers to a bow (**examiner choice** – the examiner will state which with each requested scale).
- Can be played with 'even notes' (quavers) **or** 'long tonic' rhythms. Scales are shown with 'long tonic' for illustrative purposes only (**candidate choice** – see page 6 for further information).

Major Scales

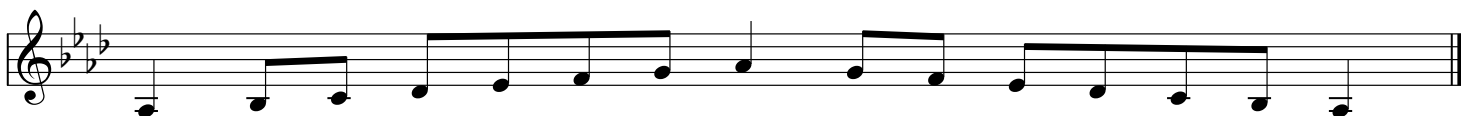
D major, two octaves



C major, two octaves



A^b major, one octave



E^b major, one octave



E major, one octave



Sight Reading

In the exam, you have a choice between either a Sight Reading test or an Improvisation & Interpretation test. The examiner will ask you which one you wish to choose before commencing. Once you have decided you cannot change your mind.

In the sight reading test, the examiner will give you a four-bar example in the key of D major, B \flat major, C major or A minor, to be played unaccompanied. You will first be given 90 seconds to practise. After the practise time, the examiner will ask you to commence the test.

While the assessed part of the test is not played to a metronome click, you may ask to hear the minimum tempo on a metronome at the start of, or throughout your practice time. Additionally, you may ask to hear a few seconds of the tempo on a metronome before the assessed part of the test begins.

Sight Reading | Example 1

Vivace ♩ = 88

mf

f *p* *f*

3

Please note: The tests shown are examples: The examiner will give you a different version in the exam.

Sight Reading | Example 2

Moderato ♩ = 74

mf *p*

Please note: The tests shown are examples: The examiner will give you a different version in the exam.