

ALBERT ELLMENREICH (1816-1905)

Spinnliedchen “Spinning Song” A GUIDE TO INTERPRETATION BY COSMO BUONO



Albert Ellmenreich was a German composer, actor, singer and director. He is mostly remembered for his Spinning Song. It can awaken a sense of musical imagination and teach valuable technical elements to aspiring students. The key is F Major, so practice the scale in F Major as a supplement to learning this piece. It will help you get a sense of the key as well as the fingering. Learn each hand separately and slowly.

The left hand seems quite easy, so be sure you get a sense of the distance from the F to the C and in measure 11 the octave C to C. This should be in your memory when you put the hands together. It will also will enable you to focus on the more challenging right hand.



Keep the left hand light by playing it with a relaxed finger. One of the important things the piece teaches is how to change the balance in the hand from the right to the left. At measure 27, even when you are learning it separately, give more weight to the left hand by curving your fingers more.



At measure 43, we go back to the balance being toward the right hand, so lighten and relax the left hand fingers. When learning the right hand, do it separately, keeping the fingers curved.



Pay particular attention to the jumps such as the one at measure 4. As you practice, remember how it feels physically to make the jump and do this with all other changes of the hand.



At measure 27, keep the right hand light when you are learning it separately so that you are preparing for the balance you'll need when you put it together. The left hand should be more important here.



At measure 43, go back to keeping the right hand curved and strong to make the melody clear. If you cannot reach the octaves in measures 43 and 47, just play the top E, and don't worry about your hand. It will grow!



If that is a problem in measures 50 and 51, divide the octaves between the two hands.



[Spinning Wheel Video](#)

In the composer's time, a spinning wheel was a device used to make yarn. It had a rhythmic sound that Ellmenreich imitated so well in his composition. The left hand imitates the motion of the wheel, so detach the notes to give it a feeling of movement.

In the middle section from measure 27, the movement stops, and perhaps this was how the people spinning the yarn felt – cheerful and delighted with their work.



At measure 52, we go back to the imitation of the wheel and from measure 76 to the end, we should hear the spinning wheel slowing down so make a *ritard* to the end. Be sure not to slow down too soon, as it should be gradual and sound as if the wheel has slowly stopped. This is a lovely example of how music can create pictures and take us to different places. Do it with dynamics and rubato (getting slightly faster and slower), to change the character of each section of the piece.

