

Limehouse blues

Words by Douglas Furber, Music by Philip Braham

Steadily (♩ = 104)

This song gained popularity in the music-hall revue 'A to Z' (London 1921) and later became a big hit for the singer Gertrude Lawrence in her career on the New York stage. It also featured in a film made in 1945, based on the history of the *Ziegfeld Follies*, extravagant showcase productions for the star performers and popular songs of their day. The film was directed by Vincente Minnelli and starred a string of greats, including Fred Astaire, Lucille Ball, Gene Kelly and Minnelli's wife, Judy Garland.

Notice how the rhythm is repeated in four bar phrases as the tune develops. Meanwhile the dynamics build from *p* to *f*, then drop down to build up a second time. The use of seventh chords nearly always suggests a blues scale.

Ballin' the Jack

Words by James Burris, Music by Chris Smith

Freely (♩ = 120) (♩♩ = $\overline{\text{♩} \text{♩}}$)

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of music. The first system starts with a tempo marking of 'Freely' and a metronome indication of 120 beats per minute, with a note that two eighth notes equal a dotted quarter note. The piano part features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand with fingerings 2, 5, 1, and 5. The melody in the right hand includes fingerings 5, 3, and 2. The second system continues the melody with more complex fingerings (1, 5, 4, 5, 3, 4, 3, 4, 2, 3, 2, 1, 2) and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The third system concludes the piece with a final flourish and a dynamic marking of *mp*. The piano part maintains the same accompaniment pattern throughout.

This piece can have a slightly comical feel about it. The song originally featured in the spectacular vaudeville revue *The Passing Show Of 1915* and it also appears in the film *For Me And My Gal* (1942). Vaudeville was a name which came to be used for the live variety shows that were big business in music-halls between the 1890s and 1920s.

Make sure the rhythm is very strong, really swing the quavers and imagine you are playing for a troupe of tap dancers! You must move confidently through the chromatic shifts of the chords in the left hand, so you might like to practise these separately. See if you can gradually build the speed of your left hand while tapping counts with the right hand.

Chimes blues

Joseph Oliver

Laid back (♩ = 88) (♩♩ = ♩♩♩)

The piano score for 'Chimes blues' is written for a single piano. It is in 4/4 time and marked mezzo-piano (mp). The tempo is 'Laid back' with a quarter note equal to 88 beats per minute. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score is divided into three systems of four measures each. The first system begins with a mezzo-piano (mp) marking. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together in groups of 2, 3, or 4. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. The second system continues the melodic and harmonic development. The third system concludes the piece with a final cadence. The score is separated by double bar lines.

The composer, Joe Oliver, was a cornet player, born in Louisiana in 1885. As a band leader he earned the name 'King' Oliver and for a while he employed the young Louis Armstrong in the post of second trumpet!

Don't miss the opportunity to shape this piece by making a feature of the accents. Keep the quavers moving, particularly in bars 21 and 22, and during rests be sure that your left hand is preparing to play again.