

Charlie Kreidler

Sympathetic Etude

written for BMC Etudes Project 2025

Etude for Piano

Duration 3'

What is Sympathetic vibration?:

Sympathetic vibration in a piano occurs when a string vibrates in response to another string vibrating at the same or a harmonically related frequency.

In this etude, sympathetic vibrations are created by silently depressing keys to allow their hammers to rise and become susceptible to ring by other played notes.

Performace Notes:

- Only playable on a grand or baby grand piano, not upright.

Notation Notes:

The image shows a musical score for a piano etude. It consists of two main staves: 'Sounding Harmonics' and 'Piano'. The 'Sounding Harmonics' staff is a single treble clef staff in 4/4 time, showing five measures of notes with square noteheads and a *pppp* dynamic marking. The 'Piano' staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) in 4/4 time, showing five measures of music. The piano part features square noteheads in the bass clef and square noteheads in the treble clef. The dynamics for the piano part are *mp*, *p*, *mf*, *pp*, and *ppp* across the five measures. The piano part ends with a fermata over a chord in the final measure.

- Notes in square note heads are to be depressed silently to raise the hammers. Notes with square noteheads should never be audible from pressing down on the keys.

-The ossia staff above the piano staves is an approximation of the harmonics produced by the sympathetic strings. Depending on the piano, these harmonics might ring slightly differently.

Note from the composer:

Creating an etude for an already accomplished pianist sounded like a very daunting task. Because I am not a pianist myself, I feel like anything I write, no matter how idomatic, could never fully reach the experience and expertise of a skilled pianist in a pedagogical way.

I wrote "Sympathetic Etude" as a way for myself and the pianist to meet in the middle. This etude allows both the composer and pianist to explore the piano as if it is a new instrument, relying on unusual performace practices and sympathetic vibrations to propel the piece. This etude allows the performer to take their time experimenting with the new harmonic landscape and practice these new techniques if they wish to use them in their future playing.

-Charlie Kreidler

Sympathetic Etude

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CHARLIE KREIDLER (2025)

Duration: ca. 3'

(♩ = 50)

Sounding Harmonics

Piano

mp *p* *mf* *pp* *ppp*

ppp

⑥ ⑨

sf *f* *ppp* *f*

pp echo *ppp* *p* *ppp*

Ped. catch resonance

Ped. catch resonance

Ped. catch resonance

16

Musical score for measures 16-19. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of three systems. The first system (measures 16-17) features a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The second system (measures 18-19) features a grand staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. Dynamics include *mf*, *f snarky*, *ff*, *p*, and *ppp*. A performance instruction "(Bb - A)" is present in measure 18. The bass line includes slurs and accents.

20

Musical score for measures 20-26. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system (measures 20-21) features a grand staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second system (measures 22-26) features a grand staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). Dynamics include *ppp*, *ff*, *mp*, and *ppp*. Performance instructions include "8^{vb}...", "Ped. catch resonance", and "8^{vb}...". A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a "3" in measure 22.

27 a tad faster (♩ = 63)

Musical score for measures 27-30. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system (measures 27-28) features a grand staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second system (measures 29-30) features a grand staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). Dynamics include *ppp*, *f*, and *mp*. Performance instructions include "Ped. catch resonance" and "(hand roles switch)".

30

mf *p*

35

(37) tempo primo (♩ = 50)

f *f* *p*

Red. catch resonance

40

(harmonic cluster)

ppp *pppp* *mp*

8^{vb} 8^{vb} 8^{vb}

Brevard NC, June 2025

*Place entire right forearm, palm down, on the white keys of the piano. Start with finger tips on B, just above the C in the left hand, and in m.43 slowly lift your arm to a 90° angle by raising your palm straight up. The effect is a gradual fade of harmonics that lead to complete silence and the end of the etude.