

Isaac ALBENIZ

EI ALBAICÍN

IBERIA book III N° 1



Piano Practical Editions

[pianopracticaeditions.com](http://pianopracticaeditions.com)

Musical Health Warning : please be aware that these editions are definitely not urtext and should be consulted together with a traditional version. They have been devised purely to help solve musical and technical problems at the piano.

Please send comments and error reports to  
Ray Alston [contact@pianopracticaleditions.com](mailto:contact@pianopracticaleditions.com)

# Isaac ALBENIZ 1860 - 1909

## EL ALBAICÍN

*de la suite "IBERIA"*

Dedicated To Marguerite Hasselmans (Fauré's mistress) the first piece of book III evokes the Romany district of Granada. With its winding, medieval streets *El Albaicín* is a magical quarter on a hill facing the Alhambra, with a maze of very narrow streets.

Albeniz conveys spicy Andalusian fragrance from its very first plucked sounds to the final flourish, passing through passionate scenes of flamenco *bulerías* and evocative *cante jondo*.\*

When I first heard Alicia De Larrocha perform Albeniz I was amazed and impressed by the language and technical mastery of both composer and interpreter. And when I was finally able to attempt *Iberia*, I noticed that the text (Éditions Salabert) was often difficult to study: there were inaccuracies, many accidentals and too many instructions, coupled with sub-standard engraving; so I decided to edit the music myself.

In spite of passing through many key and metre changes, the composer has curiously written this complex work entirely in 3/8 time with a key signature of 5 flats. Was this through negligence or by design? If the former, I humbly offer this edition which makes quite a few changes of key and time signature, rendering, I believe, the text easier to

comprehend and read by eliminating quite a few challenging accidentals.

I plead guilty to not having religiously copied every dot, accent, sign, pedal marking and many others. Albeniz was very zealous in having often embellished many, sometimes conflicting, instructions and I have tried to simplify the music within reason relying upon present-day sophisticated pianists and teachers reading the score philosophically.

Albéniz was an extrovert with a keen sense of humour, loved and respected by all who knew him. In this wonderful and imaginative music, he was also flamboyant with long descriptions in French and pedalling directions which sometimes seem to be a whirlwind of far-fetched impossibilities — unreasonable and endearing as they are.

In addition to some suggested fingerings, the appendix contains comments, afterthoughts and a vocabulary. Redistribution between the hands comes under close scrutiny to make certain passages easier or more persuasive. It is possible, even desirable, to use the sostenuto pedal effectively, although this is entirely editorial.

\* Deeply moving vocal flamenco

A pastel showing Granada from a steep street of *El Albaicín*.  
With kind permission of the artist.



EUGENIO MAYOR

# EL ALBAICÍN

Allegro assai, ma melanconico ♩ = 60

ppp  
5  
2  
*petite pédale et très estompé*

6  
*toujours nonchalant, uniforme et melancolique*

16  
1  
1

21  
5  
2  
1

26  
4  
4

31  
5  
pp  
5  
1  
2

36  
4  
2

41 *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *sfz* *f*

Measures 41-45 of a piano score in a minor key. The right hand features a complex rhythmic pattern with slurs and accents. The left hand provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. Dynamic markings include *sfz* (sforzando) and *f* (forte).

46 *fff* *sfz*

Measures 46-50. The right hand continues with slurred and accented notes. The left hand has a more active role with slurs and accents. Dynamic markings include *fff* (fortissimo) and *sfz*.

51 *simile* *sec* *sec* *sec*

Measures 51-55. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and accents. The left hand has a rhythmic pattern with slurs and accents. Dynamic markings include *simile* and *sec* (staccato).

56 *ff strepitoso* *staccato et sec*

Measures 56-60. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and accents. The left hand has a rhythmic pattern with slurs and accents. Dynamic markings include *ff* (fortissimo), *strepitoso* (strepitously), and *staccato et sec*.

61 *molto sforzato* *simile* *poco rit.* *p*

Measures 61-65. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and accents. The left hand has a rhythmic pattern with slurs and accents. Dynamic markings include *molto sforzato*, *simile*, *poco rit.* (poco ritardando), and *p* (piano).

65 *pp* *p* *rit.* *pp* *rit.*

$\text{♩} = \text{♩}$  lo stesso tempo che prima *calando* *a tempo*

69 *p* *ppp* *céleste*  
*tenuto*

*bien uniforme, comme un instrument à anche*

2 *Red.*

73 *p* *bien articulé* *ppp* *simile*

2 *Red.*

77 *plus sonore ma non forte* *pressez un peu*

*a tempo*

80 *ppp* *simile* *p*

*Red.*

*poco rubato*

83 *ppp* *poco più f* 243 312

*Red.*

86 *ppp* *f subito* *mordant*

*Red.*

90 *fff* *ff*

94 *strepitoso*

98 *ff* *simile* 4 5 3

*toujours mordant*

102

Musical score for measures 102-105. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a complex melodic line with many accidentals and slurs. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a rhythmic accompaniment with many slurs and accents. Measure numbers 4, 5, and 5 are written above the upper staff. A fermata is placed over the final measure (105).

106

*fff* *ff*

sopra

Musical score for measures 106-109. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with slurs and accents. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs and accents. The dynamic markings *fff* and *ff* are present. The word *sopra* is written below the lower staff. Measure numbers 4, 5, and 4 are written above the upper staff.

110

Musical score for measures 110-113. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with slurs and accents. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs and accents. Measure numbers 2, 2, and 2 are written above the upper staff.

114

*sfz* *sfz*

simile

Musical score for measures 114-117. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with slurs and accents. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs and accents. The dynamic markings *sfz* and *sfz* are present. The word *simile* is written above the upper staff. Measure numbers 2, 3, and 4 are written above the lower staff.

118

*f*

sopra

Musical score for measures 118-121. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with slurs and accents. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs and accents. The dynamic marking *f* is present. The word *sopra* is written above the lower staff. Measure numbers 3, 1, and 1 are written above the upper staff. The system ends with a double bar line and a 3/4 time signature.

2 2 5 131

*bien articulé et doux*

122

*calando*

*ppp*

*petite pédale*

*Péd.*

2 1 5

125

*p*

2 1 4

128

*ppp*

*p*

*Péd.*

2 1

131

*ppp*

*p*

*calando*

*Péd.*

*f subito*

134

*ppp*

*Péd.*



Musical score for measures 138-141. The piece is in B-flat major and 3/4 time. Measure 138 starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a *Red.* (ritardando) marking. The right hand plays a descending eighth-note scale, and the left hand plays a bass line. Measures 139-141 feature a long melodic line in the right hand with a *senza pedale* instruction. The left hand continues with a bass line. A *Red.* marking is present at the end of measure 141.

Musical score for measures 142-145. The piece is in B-flat major and 3/4 time. Measure 142 starts with a *Red.* marking. Measures 143-145 feature a series of accented chords in the right hand, marked *sfz* (sforzando). The left hand plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. A *Red.* marking is present at the end of measure 142.

Musical score for measures 146-149. The piece is in B-flat major and 3/4 time. Measures 146-148 feature a series of accented chords in the right hand, marked *sfz*. Measure 149 features a forte (*ff*) dynamic and a *sfz* marking. The right hand plays a descending eighth-note scale, and the left hand plays a bass line. A *Red.* marking is present at the end of measure 149.

con anima a tempo

Musical score for measures 150-151. The piece is in B major and 3/4 time. Measure 150 starts with a forte (*ff*) dynamic and a *spiritoso* marking. The right hand plays a series of accented chords, and the left hand plays a bass line. A *Red.* marking is present at the end of measure 150.

Musical score for measures 152-155. The piece is in B major and 3/4 time. Measures 152-155 feature a series of accented chords in the right hand, marked *sfz*. The left hand plays a bass line. A *Red.* marking is present at the end of measure 152.

154 *en dehors*

Musical score for measures 154 and 155. The piece is in a key with three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a common time signature. Measure 154 features a treble clef with a series of eighth notes and a bass clef with a single eighth note. Measure 155 continues with similar patterns, including a triplet of eighth notes in the treble and a quarter note in the bass. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1-5. A 'V' symbol is placed above the treble staff in measure 155.

156 *Gva*

Musical score for measures 156 and 157. Measure 156 has a treble clef with a triplet of eighth notes and a bass clef with a quarter note. Measure 157 features a treble clef with a triplet of eighth notes and a bass clef with a quarter note. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1-5. A 'V' symbol is placed above the treble staff in measure 156. The marking 'Gva' is written above the treble staff in measure 156.

158 *ff*

Musical score for measures 158, 159, 160, and 161. Measure 158 has a treble clef with a triplet of eighth notes and a bass clef with a quarter note. Measure 159 has a treble clef with a triplet of eighth notes and a bass clef with a quarter note. Measure 160 has a treble clef with a triplet of eighth notes and a bass clef with a quarter note. Measure 161 has a treble clef with a triplet of eighth notes and a bass clef with a quarter note. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1-5. A 'V' symbol is placed above the treble staff in measures 158, 159, and 160. The marking 'ff' is written above the treble staff in measure 158.

160 *m.d.*

Musical score for measures 160, 161, 162, and 163. Measure 160 has a treble clef with a triplet of eighth notes and a bass clef with a quarter note. Measure 161 has a treble clef with a triplet of eighth notes and a bass clef with a quarter note. Measure 162 has a treble clef with a triplet of eighth notes and a bass clef with a quarter note. Measure 163 has a treble clef with a triplet of eighth notes and a bass clef with a quarter note. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1-5. A 'V' symbol is placed above the treble staff in measures 160, 161, and 162. The marking 'm.d.' is written above the treble staff in measure 160.

162 *en dehors* *fff*

Musical score for measures 162, 163, 164, and 165. Measure 162 has a treble clef with a triplet of eighth notes and a bass clef with a quarter note. Measure 163 has a treble clef with a triplet of eighth notes and a bass clef with a quarter note. Measure 164 has a treble clef with a triplet of eighth notes and a bass clef with a quarter note. Measure 165 has a treble clef with a triplet of eighth notes and a bass clef with a quarter note. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1-5. A 'V' symbol is placed above the treble staff in measures 162, 163, and 164. The marking 'en dehors' is written above the treble staff in measure 162. The marking 'fff' is written above the treble staff in measure 164.

164

Musical score for measures 164-165. The right hand features a series of chords with slurs and accents. The left hand has a bass line with fingerings 3 5 4, 5 3 2, 5 1, and 5.

166

*ff*

*legato*  
*bien articulé*

*marcato*

Musical score for measures 166-167. Measure 166 includes the dynamic *ff* and the instruction *marcato*. Measure 167 includes *legato* and *bien articulé*. The right hand has slurs and accents. The left hand has fingerings 1 3, 2 2 3, 2 2 3, 4, 1 4, and 1.

168

Musical score for measures 168-169. The right hand has slurs and accents. The left hand has fingerings 1 3, 2 2 3, 4, 1 4, and 1.

170

*animato*

*m.d.*

Musical score for measures 170-171. Measure 170 includes the instruction *animato*. Measure 171 includes *m.d.*. The right hand has slurs and accents. The left hand has fingerings 1 3, 4, 3, 4, and 3.

172

*ff sempre*

Musical score for measures 172-173. Measure 172 includes the instruction *ff sempre*. The right hand has slurs and accents. The left hand has fingerings 4, 3, 2, and 2.

*p*

174 *ff* *f marcato*

176

178 *p* *f* *en dehors*

180 *chanté* *ca - - - lan - - - - do* *pp*

182 *a tempo* *ff* *ff*

186

*f*

*f*

190

*f*

*simile*

*p*

194

*pp*

*p*

*pp*

*rit.*

*poco meno mosso e ritardando sino al maggiore*

198

*p*

*dolce bien articulé*

2<sup>da</sup>

200

*ppp*

*vibrato*

*m.f.*

commencez doucement et ne reprenez le mouvement que graduellement, mais toujours un peu retenu

204

*p*

*calando*

Sost Ped.  
sourdine  $8^{vb}_{-1}$

206

*a tempo*

*ppppp*

*sfz*

$8^{vb}_{-1}$

208

*poco rubato*

*p*

$8^{vb}_{-1}$

210

*ppppp*

*sfz*

$8^{vb}_{-1}$

Sost Ped. off

212

*pesante* *rit.* *con anima*

*p* *pppp*

*sfz* *loco tre corde* *sfz*

214

*pppp* *dolce* *reprenez*

*f*

216

*pesante* *pppp*

*ff*

218

*pppp* *p dolce*

220

*a tempo*

*p*

*Sost Ped.*

222

*espress.*

*sotto voce*

*rall.*

224

*a tempo*

*ppp*

*pp*

*petite pédale et sombrement*

227

*a tempo*

*mf*

*p*

*très rythmé*



231

*sfz*

*senza pedale*

*senza pedale*

235

*sfz*

*sempre staccato e senza pedale*

238

*8va*

*allargando*

*fff*

241

*a tempo*

*8va*

*brusquement*

*sfz*

*fff*

*8va*

*Ped.*

Musical Health Warning : please be aware that these editions are definitely not urtext and should be consulted together with a traditional version. They have been devised purely to help solve musical and technical problems at the piano.

Please send comments and error reports to  
Ray Alston : [contact@pianopracticaleditions.com](mailto:contact@pianopracticaleditions.com)

## Appendix

### Comments, afterthoughts & vocabulary

- None of the sostenuto pedal suggestions are attributed to Albeniz. With practice it is possible to combine the sostenuto\* and soft pedals with the left foot, judiciously coupled with the sustained pedal, producing wonderful impressionist orchestral sounds.
- Given the composer's dynamic range is *ppppp* to *fffff*, *ff* is not all that loud!

### **Duration:** 7'30

- 88 & 136 *f* subito assumed
- 123 mordent moved to 3rd beat in line with similar bars (i.e. 127)
- 150 & 152 chordal writing to match 158 & 160
- 167 & 9 bass F has a doubtful tie here
- 175 the final C<sub>b</sub> has an error in the original edition
- 177 1st beat — there is a likely error in the treble, modified here
- 220 Be sure to use the sostenuto pedal during the RH demi-semiquaver rest
- 224-227 RH slurred in the original edition; Alicia De Larrocha also plays the LH staccato here.
- 232 and similar — these bars are pedalled in the original
- 241 bass one octave lower

\* The sostenuto pedal was first shown in Paris at the Industrial Exposition of 1844. The idea was not immediately taken up by piano builders, but in 1874, it was perfected and patented by Steinway, soon to be fitted on all their grands and better uprights. One obvious commercial reason for not including the sostenuto pedal in musical scores must have been the thought of excluding buyers whose pianos didn't have it. Debussy and Ravel certainly played such Steinways in the Paris *salons*. Apparently, in 1900 the composer René de Castéra bought a 3-pedal Steinway on the advice of Albeniz. One could say that it took over 100 years for it to become prevalent.

This is Albeniz commenting on his own music written before Iberia: "Here are among them a few things that are not completely worthless. The music is a bit infantile, plain, spirited; but in the end, the people, our Spanish people, are something of all that. I believe that the people are right when they continue to be moved by *Córdoba*, *Mallorca*, by the copla of the *Sevillanas*, by the *Serenata*, and *Granada*. In all of them I now note that there is less musical science, less of the grand idea, but more colour, sunlight, flavour of olives. That music of youth, with its little sins and absurdities that almost point out the sentimental affectation... appears to me like the carvings in the Alhambra, those peculiar arabesques that say nothing with their turns and shapes, but which are like the air, like the sun, like the blackbirds or like the nightingales of its gardens. They are more valuable than all else of Moorish Spain, which though we may not like it, is the true Spain".

bien uniforme, comme un instrument à anche	even tone, like a wind instrument
petite pedale	soft pedal
bien estompé	veiled, very blurred
toujours nonchalant uniforme et melanconique	unhurried, even in tone and sad
céleste	very soft
bien articulé	articulate, very clear
plus sonore	more tone
pressez un peu	hurrying a little
mordant	biting
doux	gentle
en dehors	in relief
chanté	singing tone
sino al maggiore	until the major section
vibrato	vibrated (i.e. pedalled)
commencez doucement et ne reprenez le mouvement que graduellement	begin gently, gradually gaining momentum
mais toujours un peu retenu	but always a little held back
reprenez	back to tempo
sombrement	darkly
très rythmé	very rhythmical
brusquement	suddenly