

Sheet Music For Once Upon A December

ONCE UPON A DECEMBER
from the Broadway Musical ANASTASIA

Words and Music by LYNN AHRENS
and STEPHEN FLAHERTY

Misterioso (♩ = 134)

Bm *mp* like a music box

With pedal

F#7sus/C#

F#7 F#7sus/C# F#7 Bm F#7sus/C#

ANYA:

Danc - ing bears,

B7/D# Em Em/G Bm/F# Em/G

paint - ed wings, things I al - most re - mem -

Bm/F# F#7(no3) Bm F#7sus/C# B7/D# E

ber. And a song some - one sings,

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Sheet music for **Once Upon a December** is a treasured resource for musicians and fans of the beloved animated film "Anastasia," which brought this enchanting song to life. Composed by Stephen Flaherty with lyrics by Lynn Ahrens, "Once Upon a December" evokes a sense of nostalgia and longing, making it a favorite among pianists, vocalists, and music enthusiasts alike. In this article, we will delve into the origins of the song, its musical composition, where to find the sheet music, and tips for playing and interpreting this timeless piece.

Origins of "Once Upon a December"

The Story Behind the Song

"Once Upon a December" is featured in the 1997 animated film "Anastasia," which tells the story of the lost Russian princess, Anastasia Romanov. The song is sung by the protagonist, Anastasia, as she reminisces about her childhood and the memories of her family. Its haunting melody and poignant lyrics capture the essence of nostalgia and the search for identity, resonating deeply with audiences.

Composer and Lyricist

Stephen Flaherty composed the music for "Once Upon a December," while Lynn Ahrens provided the lyrics. Flaherty's rich musical style blends classical influences with Broadway flair, creating a memorable and evocative piece. Ahrens' lyrics beautifully convey the themes of memory and longing, making the song a standout moment in the film.

The Musical Composition

Key and Structure

"Once Upon a December" is typically played in the key of A major, which contributes to its dreamy and nostalgic feel. The song is structured in a verse-chorus format, making it accessible for performers while allowing for expressive interpretation.

- Verse: The verses introduce the themes of memory and longing, featuring flowing melodies that gradually build emotional intensity.
- Chorus: The chorus serves as the emotional centerpiece, with a soaring melody that encapsulates the song's essence. It is here that the listener truly feels the weight of Anastasia's memories.

Melodic and Harmonic Elements

The song's melody is characterized by its lyrical quality and wide vocal range, making it a favorite for singers. The harmonic structure is rich, with lush chord progressions that enhance the emotional depth of the piece. Key elements include:

1. Arpeggiated Accompaniments: The piano often features arpeggiated chords that create a flowing, almost ethereal sound.
2. Dynamic Variations: The use of dynamics adds to the emotional impact, allowing performers to convey a sense of longing and nostalgia.
3. Modal Interchanges: The harmonic palette includes modal interchange, adding color and complexity to the music.

Finding Sheet Music for "Once Upon a December"

Official Publications

The most reliable source for sheet music is through official publications. Various music publishers have released arrangements of "Once Upon a December" for different instruments and skill levels. Some notable editions include:

- Vocal Selections from Anastasia: This book includes the complete vocal score for the musical, featuring "Once Upon a December" along with other popular songs.
- Piano Solo Arrangements: Arrangements for solo piano are available, catering to different skill levels from beginner to advanced.

Online Resources

In addition to official publications, numerous online platforms offer sheet music for "Once Upon a December." Some popular websites include:

1. MusicNotes: A large collection of arrangements available for instant download in various formats.
2. Sheet Music Plus: Offers a variety of arrangements, including piano, vocal, and instrumental versions.
3. MuseScore: A community-driven site where users can find and share sheet music, including user-generated arrangements of "Once Upon a December."

Free Sheet Music Options

For those on a budget, there are several websites that offer free sheet music for "Once Upon a December." However, it's essential to ensure that the source is reputable and the arrangements are legal. Some options include:

- IMSLP (International Music Score Library Project): A resource for public domain music, where you may find free arrangements.
- Free-scores.com: A platform that offers a selection of free sheet music, including various arrangements of popular songs.

Tips for Playing "Once Upon a December"

Interpretation and Expression

"Once Upon a December" is a song that thrives on emotional expression. Here are some tips for conveying the song's poignant themes:

1. Dynamics: Pay attention to the dynamics in the score. Use crescendos and decrescendos to add depth and emotion to the performance.
2. Phrasing: Consider the natural phrasing of the melody. Allow pauses and breath marks to enhance the storytelling aspect of the song.
3. Tempo: While the song has a gentle, flowing tempo, feel free to interpret it in a way that reflects your personal connection to the music.

Technical Considerations

When preparing to play "Once Upon a December," focus on the following technical aspects:

- Hand Position: Ensure a relaxed hand position while playing arpeggiated chords to maintain fluidity.
- Pedaling: Use the sustain pedal judiciously to create a smooth legato sound, particularly in the arpeggios.
- Practice Slowly: Break the piece down into sections and practice slowly to master tricky passages before gradually increasing the tempo.

Conclusion

In conclusion, sheet music for "Once Upon a December" is not only a vital resource for musicians but also a gateway to experiencing the emotional depth of this beloved song. Its rich musical composition, origins in a powerful narrative, and accessibility through various platforms make it a timeless piece for performers of all skill levels. Whether you are a vocalist interpreting the lyrics or a pianist bringing the haunting melody to life, "Once Upon a December" continues to resonate with audiences, evoking memories and emotions that transcend time. With the right resources and a thoughtful approach, anyone can enjoy playing and sharing this beautiful song.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I find sheet music for 'Once Upon a December'?

You can find sheet music for 'Once Upon a December' on various music websites like MusicNotes, Sheet Music Plus, and sometimes on free sheet music sites like MuseScore.

Is 'Once Upon a December' available for different instruments?

'Once Upon a December' is available for various instruments including piano, violin, and flute. Many arrangements cater to solo performances as well as ensembles.

Are there any beginner-friendly versions of 'Once Upon a December'?

Yes, there are simplified versions of 'Once Upon a December' designed for beginners. These often include easier melodies and basic chord progressions.

What movie features the song 'Once Upon a December'?

'Once Upon a December' is featured in the animated film 'Anastasia', which was released in 1997.

Can I download 'Once Upon a December' sheet music for free?

There are some websites that offer free arrangements of 'Once Upon a December', but be sure to check the copyright status to ensure legality.

What is the genre of 'Once Upon a December'?

'Once Upon a December' is primarily a musical theatre and film song, often categorized under classical crossover due to its orchestral arrangement.

Are there vocal versions of 'Once Upon a December' available?

Yes, there are vocal arrangements available for 'Once Upon a December', suitable for solo singers or choral groups.

How can I improve my piano skills to play 'Once Upon a December'?

To improve your piano skills for playing 'Once Upon a December', practice regularly, focus on hand coordination, and consider using tutorial videos for guidance.

What are some popular arrangements of 'Once Upon a December'?

Popular arrangements of 'Once Upon a December' include those for solo piano, string quartet, and vocal with piano accompaniment, which capture the song's enchanting melody.

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