Inside Burgmüller's *La Candeur*

Friedrich Burgmüller, *La Candeur* (Candor), 25 Easy and Progressive Studies, Op. 100 No. 1 — a singing line in C major

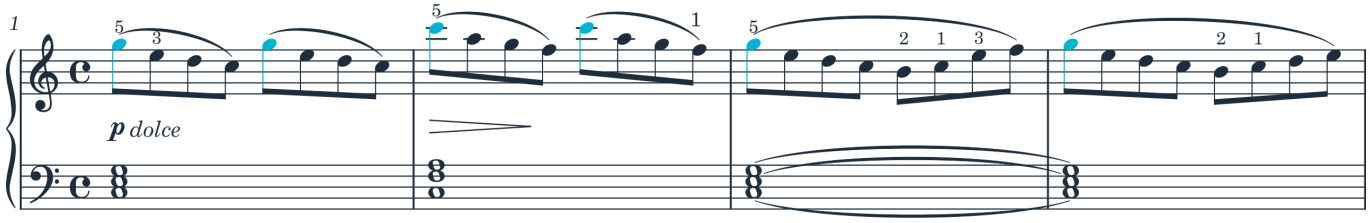
Friedrich Burgmüller (1806–1874), a German piano teacher in Paris, published his *25 Études faciles et progressives*, Op. 100, around 1851 (Handout 343 tells his story). No. 1 is the gentlest: *La Candeur* means candor, or sincerity. It is in **C major**, moves in even eighth notes, and asks one thing above all: **a smooth, singing legato** with a quiet accompaniment.
No. 15, the *Ballade*: Handout 382.

THE FORM · TWO HALVES AND AN ENDING

A · repeated	B · repeated	Ending
R.H. flows, L.H. holds · ends on G	both hands run · a shadow in bar 13	F-minor color, then home
1	9	17 23

Allegro moderato: moderately fast, a quarter note = 152 in the first edition. The first half (bars 1–8) leaves C major and ends on a **G** chord: a question. The second half answers it and comes home to C; in the ending (bars 18 and 20) the left hand plays F minor over C: a borrowed iv (Handout 384).

A · THE RIGHT HAND FLOWS, THE LEFT HAND HOLDS



Bars 1–4 with the first edition's fingering. **Cyan**: the high note that starts each group.

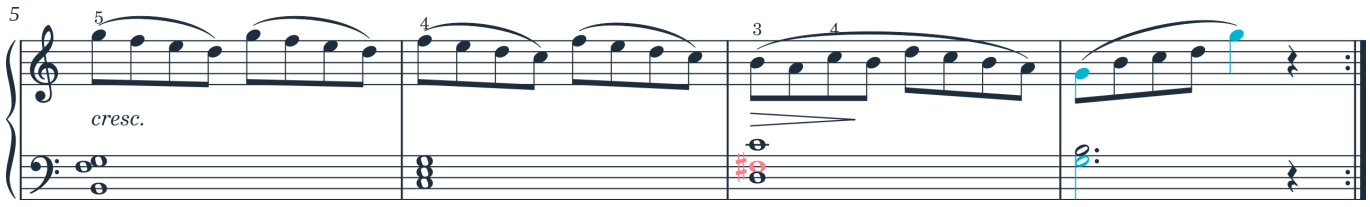
Phrasing: lean, then let it fall

The eighths come in slurred groups of four. In bars 1–2 every group starts on a high note (**G, G, C, C**) and steps down. Give the first note a little weight and let the other three fall away, softer, as the > sign in bar 2 shows. Between two slurs, lift the hand just enough to breathe, then go on (Handout 221).

Balance: the left hand is the pillow

The left hand plays one chord per bar, a whole note: C major, then F over C, then C again. Play it *p*, **softer than the tune**, and hold it the full four beats so the harmony never drops out. The first edition prints no pedal, so the legato comes from your fingers: each note lets go only as the next one sounds.

BARS 5–8 · ENDING ON A QUESTION

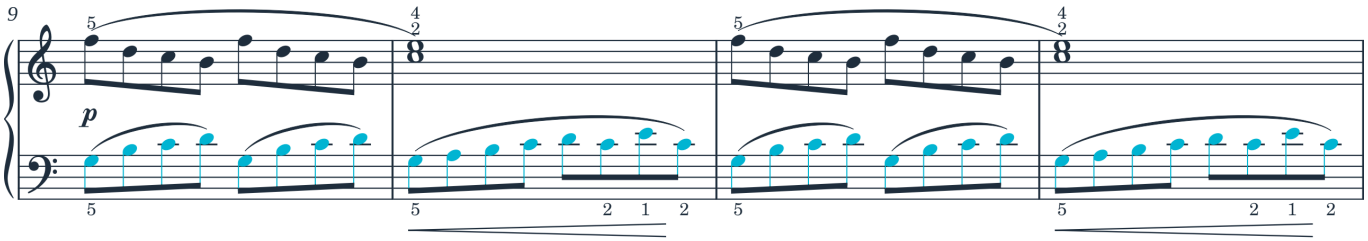


In bar 7 the left-hand chord holds an **F♯**, a note borrowed from outside C major (D–F♯–C, Handout 235). It leans up into **G**, and the first half stops there, on the dominant, like a question waiting for its answer. Let the falling groups of bar 7 get softer (the > sign), and give the last G in bar 8 its full length.

LISTEN
Scan to hear the whole piece and the bars on this sheet
tissimo.co/worksheets/burgmuller-la-candeur

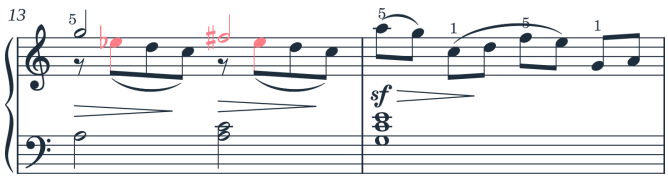
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B · THE LEFT HAND JOINS THE FLOW



After the double bar the **left hand** runs in eighths too, under its own slurs. In bars 10 and 12 the right hand simply holds a third, C–E, and the left hand carries the music alone. Now the balance flips: let the left hand sing, with the small crescendo (<) the edition writes under it, while the right hand stays still and soft.

A SHADOW, AND THE WAY HOME



In bar 13 two notes from outside C major appear: **E♭** and **F♯** (coral, the notes that changed). With the left hand's A–C they make F♯–A–C–E♭, a **diminished seventh** chord (Handout 210), and the music clouds over for one bar. Bar 14 opens with a *sf* high A over a C chord: the sun is back. Each half of bar 13 has its own > sign: two small sighs.

PRACTICE RECIPE

1. **Left hand first.** Find each whole-note chord and hold it for four slow beats. Listen that all its notes sound together and stay down.
2. **Right hand in groups.** Play bars 1–2 one group at a time: lean on the first note, then fall softly. Keep the fingers close to the keys so every note joins the next.
3. **Hands together, quietly.** The chord and the first note of the group land together; the left hand then holds while the right hand flows on.
4. **Bars 9–12 hands separately.** The left hand's fingering (5 on G, then 1–2 on the top notes) is printed in the score: use it, and keep its eighths as smooth as the right hand's.
5. **Shape the whole.** Bars 1–8 ask a question (they stop on G); bars 9–23 answer. Let the end grow softer and slower, as marked: *dim. e poco rit.*, then *pp*.

TRY IT Play bar 1 twice: once with every note equally loud, once leaning on each G and letting the group fall away. Which one sounds like singing?

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