

Mack the Knife (Moritat)

E♭ Instruments

Kurt Weill

The musical score is written for Eb instruments in the key of D major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody starts with a quarter note D4, followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note E4, and a quarter note F#4. A repeat sign follows. The first measure of the repeat has a G6 chord above it. The melody continues with a half note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. The second measure of the repeat has an Am7 chord above it. The melody continues with a half note B4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, and a quarter note F#4. The second staff starts at measure 5 with a D7 chord above the first measure. The melody continues with a half note E4, a quarter note F#4, a quarter note G4, and a quarter note A4. The third staff starts at measure 9 with an Em7 chord above the first measure. The melody continues with a half note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. The fourth staff starts at measure 13 with an Am7 chord above the first measure. The melody continues with a half note G4, a quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

“Mack The Knife” was composed by Kurt Weill for the music drama “Die Dreigroschenoper”, or in English “The Threepenny Opera”. The tune was originally entitled “Die Moritat von Mackie Messer” and premiered in 1928 in Berlin at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm. It was introduced in the United States by Louis Armstrong in 1956 and another hit rendition was recorded by Bobby Darin in 1958.

This tune is most commonly played in the key of B♭ major with a medium-up swing feel.

Supplemental Material - Mack the Knife (Moritat)

Sample Piano Voicings

Basic 3-note voicings				Rootless voicings			
G ⁶	Am ⁷	D ⁷	Em ⁷	G ⁶	Am ⁷	D ⁷	Em ⁷
6 3 1	b7 b3 1	3 b7 1	b3 b7 1	6 9 3	5 b7 b3	3 5 b7	3 b7 5

Useful Scales

G Major Pentatonic	(G ⁶)	A Dorian	(Am ⁷)	
3	D Mixolydian	(D ⁷)	E Aeolian (Natural Minor)	(Em ⁷)

Sample Bass Line

5	G ⁶	Am ⁷		
9	D ⁷	G ⁶		
13	Em ⁷	Am ⁷		
17	Am ⁷	D ⁷	G ⁷	D ⁷