

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Elementary

The Chase

Maja Brooks

Key: C Major

Here, it is necessary for the student to understand the relationship between crotchets and quavers, as this piece comprises both note values. To achieve the indicated $\frac{4}{4}$ time signature, a steady pulse must be maintained with a smooth transfer from quavers to crotchets. Aim for light and even quaver-movement to avoid any awkward bumps. Springy *staccato* notes will help to bring a playful and energetic feel to the character. The notes marked with an accent (>) should be played with a little more emphasis and can be slightly longer. Dynamic markings are indicated and will add colour to the overall effect.

Maja Brooks is a graduate of the Feliks Nowowiejski Academy of Music in Bydgoszcz, Poland. She has received many prizes for both piano and double bass. As a double bass player she has performed with many orchestras across Europe. She has taught piano and double bass for many years in her native country and in Ireland.

Little Lost Bear

Caoimhe Ní Riain

Key: A Minor

Legato phrasing (smooth and connected) is indicated above the right-hand line, aim to connect the notes within each phrase (the left-hand notes should also have a *legato* touch). The tempo marking, *Moderato* tells us that the pace is neither too slow nor too quick, but a moderate, flowing pace with a steady $\frac{4}{4}$ feel throughout. Try to establish a contrast between the *p* of line one and the *f* of line two. From bar 7 into bar 8, it is possible to incorporate a small *rit.* (gradually get slower) alongside the *diminuendo* marking (gradually get softer) to bring the piece to a gentle close.

Limerick born Caoimhe Ní Riain is a piano, voice, and theory tutor at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick. She is in the final stages of a PhD in musicology/ethnomusicology. Her research is an ethnographic study of the role that notation plays in contemporary performances of Western art music, looking at what notation encodes and what it omits for performance, this was inspired by her work as a pianist, teacher, and composer.

Robin's Call

Agnieszka Bialek

Key: F Major

A $\frac{3}{4}$ time signature indicates that there are three beats per bar. Ensure that the division of minims, crotchets and quavers is understood, to maintain a steady pulse throughout. Here, the *staccato* notes can be short and dainty, providing appropriate contrast with the *legato* phrases of bars 1, 2 etc. For the left-hand chords, practise holding the chords for longer to begin and listen carefully to ensure that both notes of the chord sound together, the *staccato* touch can be applied after the chords are securely under the fingers. Where both hands play together in bars 3–4 (and later in bars 7–8), the right hand sings the melody and the left hand should be gentler. The *f* and *p* dynamic detail will add colour, and help to bring the character to life.

Born in Poland, Agnieszka Bialek graduated from the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, Austria with a master's degree in Instrumental & Vocal Education as well as a diploma in Composition and Music Theory. Some of her earlier compositions have been published by Musikverlag Doblinger in Vienna. She has been living in Dublin since 2016, working as a piano, flute and music theory teacher, composer and arranger.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Elementary

Family

Paul Chawke

Key: G Major

The composer's metronome marking suggests a very manageable pace, not too slow and not too fast, but it must have 4 steady beats in each bar. The melodic detail is divided between the two hands, and while there is very little material for the two hands together, it is important to listen to the shape of the melodic line as it moves from one hand to the other. The opening crotchets of the left hand must be light and detached, in order to replay the same notes (this is repeated in bar 5). By contrast, the minim notes must be held for the duration of 2 beats. Observe the *legato* phrasing in bars 3 and 4. Add dynamic colour to enhance, and perhaps a small *rit.* in the closing bars to round things off nicely.

Paul Chawke grew up in Dublin but has lived in Limerick for most of his adult life. He has performed around Ireland with several musicians and conductors over the years, and has taken lessons from many great teachers. He plays piano, double bass and guitar and enjoys composing and teaching music to friends and family alike.

Walking my Dog

Aidan Duggan

Key: C Major

A lively tempo is indicated, and it is important to maintain a steady pace...avoid rushing. The articulation detail is quite specific, and the slurs/staccato markings/accents will help to bring out the character of this piece. Observe the pause mark (⌞) at the end of bar 7, and hold onto this note for a beat longer. Back to a strict tempo at bar 8, and count the crotchet-rests carefully. Again, look closely at the dynamic details; aim to make the *crescendos* gradual to create the optimum effect, and aim for a robust *f* in the closing bars to finish with aplomb. Hold the final chord for its full 4 beats.

Aidan Duggan was born 1960. He studied music at UCC and the Cork School of Music. Aidan studied composition with Dr. Marian Ingoldsby at WIT and was awarded a Masters Degree in Composition in 2008. Several of his piano pieces have been performed at Feiseana, and compositions for other instruments/voice have been performed around Ireland. Aidan is an examiner for the RIAM and has been teaching piano for four decades.

Bed Time

Cuthbert Harris

Key: C Major

Think of a lullaby and aim to adopt a gentle approach to this piece. The rolling crotchets of the left hand will help to maintain a steady $\frac{3}{4}$ feel throughout. The left hand can easily become dominant in this piece, so it is important to maintain a sense of calm within the left-hand pattern. The right hand takes the melodic line, and can sing out a little more. Be sure to hold all dotted minims for their value (3 beats) and maintain a *legato* feel throughout. Observe the tied note (right hand) in bars 7 and 8, and hold the final bar for its full value. By observing the *poco rit.* in the closing bars, the left hand can take a little extra time to place the final chord, to ensure that both notes sound together. The dynamic level should not rise much above *mp*, and the ending should taper off gradually.

Cuthbert Harris was born in Holloway, London in 1870. He graduated from the University of Durham with a Mus. B, and a Mus. D. He held organist positions at various churches in England and was professor of organ and composition at the London Organ School. He taught harmony and voice at the London Academy of Music, prepared students for music exams and wrote articles for music periodicals. He died in 1932.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Preliminary

The Cat Stalks the Mouse

Melanie Brown

Key: A Minor

Here, the character is hushed and crafty, to hint at the scheming of a cat contemplating its next meal. Count carefully to ensure 4 steady beats in each bar, and watch out for bar 8, where there is a full bar of silence! The dynamic detail is predominantly quiet (except for the final chord), but the articulation detail will greatly enhance the character... observe the *legato/staccato* phrasing and slurs carefully. The left hand remains in the same position throughout, but the right hand has some moving around to do, and these changes of hand position must be carefully planned and practised. In bars 2 and 4 it is easier to begin by playing the grace note concurrently with the main note. Later, these notes can be separated slightly, but the idea is that the two notes are played almost together ('crushed-notes'). While we generally adopt a curved hand position for playing the piano, it will be necessary to approach the final chord with a flat hand, in order to play all of the notes together. To add to this loud and dramatic effect, the pedal can be applied at the same time...the predator has struck! Be sure to hold the final chord for its full value, and add an extra beat for the pause mark (◡). The use of pedal is optional, but if used, it helps to create a dramatic ending!

Melanie Brown is an RIAM examiner. She is a graduate in historical musicology from Trinity College Dublin, holds an MA in composition from NUI Maynooth, and a PhD in ethnomusicology from the University of Limerick. Formerly composer-in-residence with the National Chamber Choir of Ireland, she is a member of the National Symphony Chorus of Ireland. In addition to teaching piano and violin, Melanie has lectured in music on undergraduate and post-graduate programmes at various universities and has been a Course Director at TCD for several years, where her teaching and research interests lie in identity politics and the role of liturgical music in minority cultural identity.

Dancing Butterflies

Agnieszka Bialek

Key: C Major

Light and even fingerwork will be needed for the running quavers of both right and left hands in this piece. Throughout, there is a dialogue between the two hands, almost like a 'call and answer'. The tempo must flow to capture the roguish character, too slow and it can easily become sluggish and laboured. Aim to contrast the *legato* quavers with bouncing *staccato* crotchets, this will add energy to the overall effect. Count four steady beats in each bar to ensure a steady pace and even distribution of quavers versus crotchets. There are just a few chords for the left hand in bars 8 and 16, approach these chords with a firm finger position (and loose wrists) to ensure that the notes of each chord sound exactly together. Observe the dynamic markings to add further contrast and colour to the overall effect.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Preliminary

A Morning Sunbeam

Florence Price

Key: G Major

A flowing tempo is needed for this piece, and although the piece is in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, it can be played with a feel of 1-in-a-bar (as the metronome marking indicates). The rolling crotchets of the left hand (in the opening bars) should be gentle, the melodic notes of the right hand will require a more singing tone. The swirly lines in bars 5–8 are phrase marks, and indicate a *legato* line that begins with the right hand and transfers across to the left hand. Take note of the change of key signature from bars 17–32, the 'F-sharp' is cancelled as the key moves to C Major. For this section, the left hand takes over the melodic interest, and the right hand must assume a gentler touch. The *Da Capo* must be observed, and the opening 16 bars should be replayed, to bring us back to the home key of G Major. Aim to shape each phrase, aim to maintain a sense of *legato*, and listen carefully to the balance between melody and accompaniment throughout.

Born in 1887, Florence B. Price was an African-American composer, pianist and teacher. She is noted as the first African-American woman to be recognised as a symphonic composer, and the first to have a composition played by a major orchestra. She died in 1953. In 2009, a substantial collection of her music was discovered in her abandoned summer home.

Marching Along

Cuthbert Harris

Key: C Major

Confident chords played with a rich *f* tone will bring out the militant character suggested by the title, and the accents will add further definition and grandeur to this piece. To ensure that the notes of the chords sound together, keep the wrists nice and loose but try to maintain a firmness in the fingers. A march requires a solid $\frac{4}{4}$ beat, so be sure to keep a steady pulse here (with a tiny *rall.* at the very end). Observe the *legato* phrasing for the right hand in bars 2–3 and 7–8 and be sure to connect the notes of these phrases. Avoid heavy quavers for the upbeats of bars 9–11, keep these light and give the emphasis to the 1st beat of the following bar each time. The *staccato* chords of the left hand in bars 9–11 should be light and crisp to add vitality.

The Drowsy Dormouse

Leslie Fly

Key: A Minor

A singing tone and *legato* line for the right-hand melody will be important to the overall effect, with a gentle left-hand accompaniment. Control of the left-hand chords is an important feature throughout. Firstly, it is important to ensure that both notes of each chord sound exactly together and this will involve separate work for the left hand at the start. Approach these chords with a loose wrist, but a fixed hand position. It is easier to practise the chords with a louder tone to begin, a gentler *p* and *mp* sound can be adopted after the technique is secure. The tempo is not fast, but avoid a dragging pace, aim for a sense of flow to the crotchet figures to keep this moving along. Shape each phrase, hold all dotted minims for their full value, and consider incorporating a small *rit.* in the final bars to bring the piece to a gentle close.

Leslie Fly was a house composer for Forsyth Bros. Ltd in the early 1900s and over many years he gained stature as a composer of educational piano music of the highest quality. His compositions are distinctive and attractive, whilst also encouraging the development of technical skills in an accessible way. Many of his albums are marked by literary themes (Robin Hood, Snow White etc.)

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Preliminary

Chop Chop!

John McLachlan

Key: C Major

A cheeky character and lively pace are needed to bring this piece to life. Aim for light *staccato* quavers in the left hand to add energy and bounce. The dotted-rhythm detail is an important feature of the right-hand line (bars 1 and 3) and it would be advisable to practise clapping this rhythm a lot. Observe the slurred notes in bars 2 and 4 and ensure that the first note connects to the second note, before lightly releasing the second note. There are changes of hand position for both hands in this piece, and it is important to map this detail out slowly to begin...fluency will happen naturally once the hand position and notes are securely in place. Dynamic markings are included and these will help to enhance the overall character. The *acciaccatura* in bar 8 (also referred to as a “crushed note” and “grace note” should not interfere with or upset the rhythm of the right hand quavers; it is a quick, lightly-played note that embellishes the main beat.

John McLachlan was born in Dublin. He has written over 80 works which have been performed in 23 countries on five continents. He has worked with many new music specialists from Ireland, the UK, France, Portugal, Spain, Romania, Poland, Japan and the US. His music has been recorded by The Dublin Guitar Quartet, Mary Dullea, John Feeley, and David Adams (among others). John has had pedagogical piano works selected and published by the RIAM. He is a member of Aosdana, Ireland's state academy for the creative arts and is represented by the Contemporary Music Centre. John is an examiner for the RIAM.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Primary

Green Reeds

Leslie Fly

Key: B flat Major

Gentle chords underlie the melody in this piece, they must be held for the value of the bar each time, as they form an important part of the harmonic texture of the piece. In bar 1 (and bar 9) there are two options given for fingering: for very small hands, the bracketed fingering will provide a more manageable option. The melody belongs to the right hand, opening with gently flowing quavers that must be *legato* in touch, but also light enough to achieve the 'swaying' character indicated by the composer. Occasional *staccato* crotchets will provide a pleasing contrast. Aim to shape each phrase, and add dynamic content to enhance. A quiet, elegant ending will bring this to a suitable close.

Game for Two

Cornelius Gurlitt

Key: C Major

Note that both hands play in the treble clef throughout this piece, it is a dialogue between the two hands, with the left hand imitating the right hand melody. It is also worth noting that the opening 8 bars are repeated again from bar 17, which cuts down a lot on the learning work! The phrasing is predominantly *legato* throughout, aim to shape each phrase by following the contour of the notes. The quavers must be even and clean in delivery, avoid any overlapping of notes. It is also important to observe all rests, and lift to avoid any blurring. '*Con moto*' (with movement) suggests a flowing pace, it does not need to be very fast, but it must have a sense of direction. Dynamics must be included to add extra colour, the overall character is playful and light-hearted.

Cornelius Gurlitt (1820–1901) was a German composer. He was a classmate of composer, Carl Reinecke, and studied with Reinecke's father at the Leipzig Conservatory. He held various posts throughout his life in Rome, Leipzig and Altona as a teacher, organist, musical director and composer. He wrote albums of character pieces and studies for children.

Sea Air

Melanie Brown

Key: C Major

This piece begins on an upbeat, and it is important to explain the function of this beat to the student, and consequently that the final bar of the piece has one less beat. Avoid accenting this upbeat, the emphasis should fall on the 1st beat of the bar. Ultimately, the speed of the quaver-movement will determine the overall tempo, but the piece should have a lively feel. Lighten the touch for the quaver passages and avoid holding onto the notes, clean articulation and even fingerwork are the essential tools to give these notes direction and shape. The *staccato* crotchets can be light and crisp to contrast with the *legato* activity of the quaver-passages. The two hands are in unison for the closing passage and exact coordination is a must, or it will sound clumsy. Observe the articulation and dynamic markings to add further dimension and character.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Primary

Having Fun at Recess

Tamara Niekludow

Key: F Major

Giocoso means humorous and joyful, and with this in mind, a lively tempo will be necessary to bring this piece to life. The rhythmic detail in the opening bar recurs throughout the piece (in both left and right hands), and it is important to secure this detail early on (counting carefully and clapping the rhythm will both help). As one hand negotiates the melodic/rhythmic detail, the opposite hand has simple chords to play and with one chord-change per bar, it is important that these semibreves are held each time. Listen carefully to the balance between left and right hands to ensure an appropriate balance between melody and accompaniment, (especially where the left hand takes over the melodic detail at bar 9). Add dynamic detail to enhance the character, and be sure to observe the *Da Capo* repeat.

Born in Poland, Tamara Niekludow began her music education at the Feliks Nowowiejski Music School in Gdansk. She is a multiple prizewinner in international piano competitions. She is studying for a Doctorate in Performance at the RIAM with Prof. Thérèse Fahy. Tamara teaches in Dublin and is an examiner for the RIAM.

Lament

Cornelius Gurlitt

Key: A Minor

As the title suggests, this piece is sombre and melancholic in character. While *Andantino* means 'slower or faster than *Andante*' the time signature gives us a further clue as to what the tempo should be: $\frac{3}{4}$ time, (Compound Duple time) indicates a feel of 2-in-a-bar (two dotted-crotchet beats), so aim for a gentle flow. The right hand has the melody and needs to have a singing quality, a *legato* feel is essential to both right and left hands throughout. In the melodic line, it is common for the quaver notes to jut-out a bit and it is important to listen to- and shape each phrase to avoid this, and maintain a lyrical feeling throughout. Add dynamic colour to further enhance, and a small *rall.* to bring the piece to a suitable close.

Mountain Rill

Cuthbert Harris

Key: C Major

A lively and energetic pace will help bring the character to life in this. The right-hand quavers must be steady and even; the left-hand crotchets will help to maintain a steady beat throughout, and the *slurred/staccato* articulation of the crotchets will add extra dimension. Aim for a feel of 2-in-a-bar to capture a feeling of direction. Watch out for bars 4, 6, 12 and 16 where there is a crotchet rest at the end of each bar; these silent beats are important to the overall metre and the shape of the phrases, so be sure to count these carefully. Dynamic contrasts will add extra colour. *Allegro* means 'fast and lively'.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade I

Rainy Day Blues

Key: F Major

Agnieszka Bialek

The title of the piece tells us what we need to know about the style and character of the piece. The $\frac{2}{4}$ time signature indicates a feel of 2-in-a-bar, and the continuous rhythmic pattern of the left hand will help to establish a steady beat throughout. Aim for a calm and quiet left-hand accompaniment, the shape (and repetition) of these chords will ensure that the rhythmic impact is felt, but the left hand should not compete with the right hand here. The melodic interest belongs to the right hand, and a *legato* touch is indicated. Occasional stressed/accented notes will add definition to the rhythmic shape, and the crushed/grace notes (eg. bar 4) will bring additional punctuation and colour (the grace notes can be played directly with the chord to begin, and later separated slightly for full effect. Add shape to the phrases and dynamic colour to enhance, and be sure to hold the final chord for its full value.

William the Norman

Key: C Major

Leslie Fly

The indication at the start: 'Well marked', signposts a steady and rhythmical execution, almost march-like in character. The piece begins with an upbeat, and this beat is divided into triplets. The three notes of the triplet must be even in delivery. Avoid accenting this upbeat and allow the emphasis to fall on the 1st beat of the bar instead. This piece does not require a fast pace, but it should be flow, the character is spirited and valiant. The triplet-upbeat figure is a feature throughout, and at bar 10, where the hands are in unison, coordination must be exact. The left hand moves between treble and bass clefs here, so be sure to plan and map out the various hand positions. The *staccato* notes can be crisp while the quaver passages are light and even. Be sure to hold the sustained notes for their full value (eg. bar 7, right hand). Allow the melodic line to project, and balance the accompanying chords carefully. In bars 19–20 the pedal is depressed at the same time the chord is played, and it is held until the end of the piece, this will add extra resonance and colour at the finish-line!

Neapolitan Song

Key: A Minor

Alfred Tofft

A *legato* feel and a singing tone (*cantabile*) will be needed for the right-hand melody in this piece. Marked *Andante* (at a walking pace), the tempo is not fast, but the quavers must have a sense of flow in this, and it is important to shape each phrase. The supporting chords of the left hand can be gently played, and remember to lift for all rests. The opening idea returns at bar 17, but the content changes from bar 20 and it is important to know the ending securely. The character is wistful and lamenting, a dab of pedal in the final bar will add colour.

Danish composer **Alfred Tofft** (1865–1931) first made a name for himself as an organist, but later turned exclusively to composition. His works include opera, chamber music, choral works and songs. Tofft was also a music critic.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade I

Cats in the Kitchen

Aidan Duggan

Key: D Minor without key signature


With dynamic markings varying between *pp* and *f*, there is scope to demonstrate a dramatic range of tonal colour in this piece. The composer reliably informs me that this piece is inspired by the play and pranks of his cats, Mog and Pog. The piece is written like a canon, with one hand imitating the other throughout. With this in mind, keep a close eye on the articulation detail for each hand, to ensure that the left hand replicates the right in all detail. The tempo, *Andantino* can mean slower or faster than *Andante*, the metronome mark indicates a suitable and manageable pace. At bar 8, *piu mosso e stringendo* indicates a quickening of the tempo, but avoid too much acceleration...aim to measure this out carefully to avoid losing the clarity and control of the fingers. Also observe that the tempo slows again from bar 12, and settles back to the original tempo at bar 14. At that point, the left hand takes over the melodic control, with the right hand imitating. The character is mischievous.

Minuetto in C

Leopold Mozart

Key: C Major

This is an elegant dance with a flowing (but not fast) tempo. Observe the articulation markings as they are an important aspect of the characterisation of this dance. Adopt a light touch where the two hands are in unison (bars 5 and 7) and ensure that the hands are coordinated. In the original piece, Leopold

Mozart indicated a mordent () for the right hand in bar 16. A mordent is a type of ornamentation (frequently used to embellish melodic notes) during the Baroque and Classical eras. In this edition, the ornament has been written out, for the convenience of the teacher/student, these notes (bar 16, beat 1) require a light and delicate touch, they are intended as a decorative characteristic and should not be cumbersome in approach. Dotted-rhythms are another feature that appear in the latter part of this dance (bars 17 and 19), and these require precise delivery. Aim to shape each phrase and add dynamic colour to further enhance. A small *rall.* to the end will give this a graceful finish.

Leopold Mozart (1719–1787) was a German composer, violinist and theorist. Today he is best known as the father and teacher of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. He also wrote a violin textbook which was influential in its day, and continues to be used as a scholarly source concerning 18th Century performance practice.

Hunting Song

Cornelius Gurlitt

Key: F Major

Note that the left hand plays in the treble clef throughout. At *Allegretto* (fast, but not as fast as *Allegro*) the tempo is manageable here, but the piece needs to have a feel of 2-in-a-bar. Avoid accenting the upbeat, the downbeat should have more emphasis. The slurs are an important feature of the articulation detail, connect the first note to the second, but release the second note with a crisp *staccato* to help achieve the *marcato* (marked) effect. The supporting chords can be light and bouncy, and the dynamics will further embellish the character. The articulation detail in bars 21–22 is tricky to coordinate, and will need slow work and a little extra care to secure. The character is good-humoured and full of life.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade II

Lady Godiva

Key: D Major

Leslie Fly

Take note of the changes of clef for the left hand, as it transfers between treble and bass clefs throughout. Observe the articulation detail carefully, as it plays an important role for both right and left hands throughout. In bars 10–11 and 14–15 the right hand must hold down the lower notes (with the thumb) while playing the upper notes *staccato*, this might be tricky to coordinate initially, but it is important to sustain those lower notes. Avoid slowing too much for the *rit.* at bar 16, as the original tempo must resume at the end of the same bar (with the return of the opening material). The overall character is bright and elegant, and it should have a lively feel. A touch of pedal in the final bar will add a little extra richness to the colour, and observe the *fermata* (pause mark) over the final chord to sustain it for a little longer.

Blues for Today

Key: D Minor

Agnieszka Bialek

The “Swing” rhythm is essential to the style and character of the piece, but this should not affect the crotchet beat, which remains steady throughout. The beat of the left-hand crotchets will help to keep the pulse steady in this, these lower notes provide a harmonic base, but should not overpower. The main rhythmic and melodic detail comes from the right hand; watch out for the tied notes (eg. end of bars 2 and 4 etc.) as these notes create a syncopated rhythm that is an important part of the rhythmic fabric. In the final bar, the right and left hands play the rhythm in unison, this detail should be carefully coordinated for tidy and exact execution. Shape the phrases and add tonal colour to further enhance.

Minuet in A Minor

Key: A Minor

George Frideric Handel

This is a stately dance, and while it should not rush, *Andante* (at a walking pace) indicates a sense of movement and it needs to have a steady flow (apart from the closing bars). For music from this period (Baroque period), articulation detail plays an important role as an expressive tool. With this in mind, aim to observe the articulation detail for both right and left hands. Notes that are marked *staccato* can be lightly detached to maintain the elegant character of the dance. For slurred notes, remember to lightly release the end of the slur to avoid any abrupt phrase-endings. Observe the semiquavers at bar 15: these are decorative notes (these *trills* that have been written out for the benefit of the student), and they require delicate fingerwork so that they don't impede the flow of the line. Dynamic colour and shaping of phrases will help to enhance the overall musical effect.

George Frideric Handel (1686–1759) was born in Halle, Germany. Well known for his operas, oratorios, anthems etc. he worked as a composer in Hamburg and Italy before settling in London in 1712, where he spent the bulk of his career. His most famous work, ‘Messiah’, was first performed in 1742, in Dublin.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade II

Allegro Assai, Op. 38 No. 34

Johann Wilhelm Hässler

Key: A Major

A quick pace with a lively and spirited character will be needed to bring this piece to life. The semiquaver passages require tidy fingerwork, keeping the touch nice and light to avoid a heavy and sluggish feel. In bars 9 and 11 the semiquavers are divided between the right and left hands and it is important to balance this carefully to achieve an even transfer. Pay careful attention to the left-hand dotted rhythm in bar 15, to ensure that the two hands are rhythmically coordinated here. Dynamic detail will add colour and vibrancy. The *staccato* notes should have bounce, the grace notes (bars 8 and 16) should be quick and light.

Johann Wilhelm Hässler (1747–1822) was a German composer, organist and pianist. His father died in 1769 and from then on he managed the family fur business, whilst still managing concert tours of Germany and further afield throughout the 1770s, 80s and 90s. In 1794 he moved to Moscow, where he worked as a teacher and composer. He remained there until his death.

Polka

Cornelius Gurlitt

Key: C Major

A Polka is a dance! *Scherzando* indicates a playful character, and *Allegretto* (fast, but not as fast as *Allegro*) signals a lively tempo for this piece. Pay heed to occasional changes of clef for the left hand, and adopt a light, bouncing *staccato* for the left-hand quavers. Nimble fingers will be needed for the right-hand semiquavers, also take note of the slurs, taking care to lightly release the final note of each slur. The opening eight bars return from bar 25 (which will lessen the learning here!). Dynamic colour will enrich the musical effect.

Lullaby

Charles Villiers Stanford

Key: G Major

Take note of the *Andante* sign (at a walking pace), and also the time signature: $\frac{6}{8}$ (compound duple time: 2 dotted crotchet beats per bar). These indicators tell us that a gentle, lilting “2-in-a-bar” feel will be needed to convey the mood of this lullaby. Both hands should adopt a *legato* feel, and a lightly pulsing left hand accompaniment should support the singing melody of the right hand. The dynamic level rises only briefly to *mf*, with much of the piece weaving between *p* and *pp* colours, aim to shape the phrases to subtly enhance. At bar 21, observe the *rall.* as the piece gradually winds down, also take note of the *fermata* (pause) signs in the final bar: hold onto these notes a little longer, to let the sound die away naturally.

Irish composer, Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924) was born in Dublin, educated at Cambridge University, before studying music in Leipzig and Berlin. At the age of 29 he was one of the founding members of the Royal College of Music, where he taught composition for the rest of his life. Among his pupils were composers whose fame went on to surpass his own, such as Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade III

Will o'the Wisp Op. 98, No. 9

Ludvig Schytte

Key: E Minor

Take note of the time signature of this piece: $\frac{3}{8}$ is 'simple time' and indicates that there are three quaver-beats in each bar. The character is impish and the '*Allegretto*' tempo marking indicates a lively pace. That said, the repeated notes must be clear and even in execution, so avoid rushing. Use a crisp *staccato* to play the repeated notes, and lift the fingers to ensure efficient and tidy fingerwork. By contrast, aim to achieve a *legato* line in the scalar passages, though the fingerwork should remain light and flowing. Add shape and dynamic colour to enhance the naughty character.

Ludvig Schytte was a Danish composer, pianist and teacher. He studied with Niels Gade, and later with Franz Liszt. He lived and taught in Vienna, and spent the last two years of his life teaching in Berlin. His shorter works are still used today as educational studies for piano students.

Sonatina in C Op. 36, No. 1: 1st mvt

Muzio Clementi

Key: C Major

The '*Alla Breve*' time signature (C) also known as 'cut-common time', indicates that there are two minim-beats per bar (instead of four crotchet-beats). With this in mind, a lively pace is required to acknowledge a feel of 2-in-a-bar, and in turn convey the energetic character of this sonata movement. A bright tone will suit the right-hand melodic line, though a lighter touch with clean fingerwork will better suit the quaver passages here. The left-hand content is sparse, its role is to accompany the melody and give harmonic support. Again, keep the left-hand quavers light, especially the notes that are played with the thumb. Aim to observe the articulation and dynamic markings to enhance the character.

Muzio Clementi was an Italian composer, virtuoso pianist, pedagogue, conductor, music editor and publisher, and piano manufacturer. He toured Europe several times, but London became his home. The harpsichord was the accepted keyboard instrument in his youth, but by the 1790's the improvements in the mechanism of the piano caused this newer instrument to gain popularity. As a composer of piano sonatinas and sonatas, Clementi was among the first to create keyboard works expressly for the capabilities of the piano.

Old French Song

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Key: G Minor

A *legato* feel is essential to the plaintive right-hand melody of this piece. The left hand must hold onto the sustained lower notes, and at the same time lightly, evenly and smoothly play the notes above, whilst allowing the melody of the right hand to sing. For the right hand, avoid accenting the upbeat to each phrase and aim to shape and colour each phrase. Touches of *legato*-pedal (where indicated) will add extra richness to the texture, but listen carefully to ensure clean pedal-changes. Watch out for the dotted-rhythm detail in bars 7, 15 and 31 to ensure the precise delivery of the semiquaver at the end of the bar. From bar 17–20 the left hand changes to *staccato* quavers, but the left hand still has the role of accompaniment and these notes should be light and delicate. Observe the *rall.* sign in the closing bars, and hold the final chord for a little longer than its value, as indicated by the pause sign (*fermata*).

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) was a Russian composer. Some of his most famous works include The Nutcracker and Swan Lake ballets, the 1812 Overture, Romeo and Juliet Overture-Fantasy, 1st Piano Concerto etc. He also wrote an Album for the Young, as he was keen to make a contribution to musical literature for children. This Album is subtitled '24 simple pieces à la Schuman'.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade III

Got those Leapfrog Blues

Réamonn Keary

Key: C Major

Note that both hands are written in the bass clef, but the left hand is constantly 'leapfrogging' between the bass and treble clefs throughout this piece. The tempo is fairly relaxed, which will give the left hand the necessary time to relocate itself each time, but initially it will take time and planning and care to ensure accuracy of notes. Take note of the rhythmic indication at the start to capture a swinging feel, and this will help to convey the bluesy character. Observe the pedal markings to add longevity to the bass notes and add extra colour. Also take note of the notes that are marked with either a *tenuto* or an accent, and mark these notes accordingly. Keep a steady pace throughout, to help achieve the rhythmic effect, and play the very last note (bar 12, bass clef) an octave lower than it is written, with the right hand.

Angelic Harmony Op. 100, No. 21

Friedrich Burgmüller

Key: G Major

Legato-pedal is essential to this piece, with clean and efficient changes of pedal required to ensure a *legato* effect, and to enhance the overall shape. The student can begin by playing each bar in block chords, to map out the position of each chord change for the hands. The pedal-changes generally occur at the beginning of each bar, making it straightforward for a student who is new to this technique. If a student is being introduced to legato-peddalling for the first time, it is advisable to begin with some easy pedalling exercises, before approaching a piece. There is no melody here as such, this piece should be a wash of harmonic colours, with light and even triplet-quavers providing the necessary momentum. A flowing tempo is necessary; the composer's suggested metronome marking is quite ambitious at: crotchet=152, but a tempo of: crotchet=138 would be more accessible and would make for a viable tempo. Aim to shape the phrases and add tonal colour. The closing bars can be slower (*più lento*), aim to sing the top note of each chord while bringing the piece to a gentle conclusion.

Friedrich Burgmüller (1806–1874) was a German pianist and composer. He wrote many pieces of salon music for the piano, and published several albums. He is perhaps best known for his collections of children's études or 'teaching pieces'.

Minuet

Jean Philippe Rameau

Key: A Minor

A light touch will suit the Baroque style and the elegant character of this dance. Although the left-hand crotchets are marked *staccato*, aim to detach these notes lightly rather than making them too short or abrupt. These detached crotchets must also be carefully balanced with the quaver-movement of the right-hand melody. The melodic line is *legato* and requires a lyrical shape, while still adopting gentler tones on the piano. The dynamic level briefly reaches *f* at bar 24, but predominantly this piece explores softer sounds, with clean quaver-work and suitable shaping of each phrase. Typically, Baroque music involves the use of ornamentation, as a means of decorating certain notes. In this case, there is a trill at bar 7 (and another at bar 35), but in this edition the trills have been notated for the convenience of the student...these semiquavers must be very light, so as not to interfere with the overall flow or become too heavy-handed. Aim for a flowing *Andante* pace (*con moto* means with movement), slowing down slightly towards the end to bring the dance to a graceful finish.

Jean Philippe Rameau (1683–1764) is regarded as one of the most important French composers and music theorists of the 18th Century. It was not until the 1720s that he won fame with his Treatise on Harmony and in the following years as a composer of masterpieces for the harpsichord.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade IV

Morning Prayer

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

Key: G Major

Relative Key: E Minor

Move gently along with his piece, in order to convey the calm and meditative character. Much of the content is chordal, and the coordination of the left and right hands is important. The top note of each chord provides the melodic line of the piece, and it requires a singing tone with beautifully shaped phrases. Legato-pedal is a must throughout, to help connect the phrases and embellish the overall colour. From bar 16, the left hand has a repeated quaver pattern, and it is important to play these low notes gently as they can easily become loud and overpowering. Dynamic detail will help to enhance, whilst remembering that the overall mood is serene and peaceful.

Cables

Patsy Jo Culleton (b. 2006)

Key: F Minor

Relative Key: A flat Major

Observe that the left hand plays in the treble clef for the opening 8 bars of the piece. The character of the opening section (bars 1–24) is reflective and expressive, the right-hand melodic material needs a *Cantabile* touch, accompanied by gentle quaver-movement from the left hand. From bar 25, the piece takes on a new momentum, with continuous semiquaver-movement for the remainder. The broken chords of the left-hand semiquavers can easily become loud and overpowering, and it is important to listen carefully to the balance between melody and accompaniment, to ensure that the melodic line carries. Take care to coordinate the left and right hands to ensure tidy delivery of these passages; a slightly slower metronome mark is suggested for this section of the piece, this will allow for control and clarity over the quicker note values, but will still give ample direction and flow to the overall effect. Clean pedal-changes are necessary throughout. Shape and colour the phrases to add extra embellishment.

***Patsy Jo Culleton** is the 2022 winner of the RIAM Composition Competition. He is 17 years old and is from South Tipperary. He loves writing songs for piano and orchestra, as well as writing and producing more modern and electronic music.*

Lustig und Traurig (Merry and Sad)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Key: C Major (the middle section moves to C Minor)

Relative Key: A Minor (the relative of C Minor is E flat Major)

The time signature is $\frac{3}{8}$ indicating that there are three quaver-beats in each bar. The outer sections of the piece are in a major key, the character here is brighter and the content is chordal. It is important for the student to listen to the top note of each chord, and to sing this melodic line. The middle section of the piece becomes darker in character, as the tonality becomes minor. The tempo can slow slightly for this section of the piece. Here, the left hand plays arpeggiated chords (known as an *alberti bass*) and while clean and even fingerwork is needed, it is important that these notes are gentle and unobtrusive, so as not to overpower the melodic content of the right hand. This piece can be played without pedal, and while the use of pedal can enhance the overall effect, clarity and control should never be sacrificed.

***Ludwig van Beethoven** was a German pianist and composer. His works rank among the most performed of the classical music repertoire and span the transition from the Classical period to the early-Romantic era in classical music.*

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade IV

Rabbit Foot

Florence Price (1887–1953)

Key: F Major

Relative Key: D Minor

Note that the time signature ($\frac{4}{8}$) indicates 4 quaver-beats in each bar. This is a lively piece, *Allegretto* is not as fast as *Allegro*, but the character must be vibrant. The articulation detail is important, and contrast between *staccato* and *legato* phrases will enhance the overall effect. Observe the pedal markings and try to execute clean pedal-changes each time. Lightness of touch for the semiquaver passages will be important, to avoid becoming laboured. Take note of the rhythmic detail in bars 7 and 31: give extra definition to the accented chord and hold for the duration of the tie to capture the syncopated rhythm. Crushed notes (eg. bars 1, 2, 3) are a feature throughout the piece and these notes are played lightly and quickly, so as not to interfere with the overall pulse and continuity. The dynamic detail is varied throughout, observe this detail to add extra dimension and dramatic effect.

Polonaise (French Suite No. 6 BWV 817)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Key: E Major

Relative Key: C sharp minor

Polonaise is a dance and should have a sense of movement (*con moto* means 'with motion') and flow. With this in mind, the continuous quavers of the left hand should move gently along, providing accompaniment to the right-hand melody. The character of this dance is elegant and dignified, the melodic line should be lyrical and *dolce* (sweet). Articulation detail is indicated for both right and left hands, and will enhance the overall character. The melodic line is largely *legato*, and where slurs are indicated (eg. bar 3) they can be played by leaning on the first note and gently releasing the second note each time. Where the right-hand line contains semiquaver passages, use light fingers to avoid a laboured feel. The *mordent* signs above the notes in bars 4, 10 etc. (♯♯) are a decorative feature commonly used in Baroque music and indicate a fast and light flurry of notes. In this case, the line passing through the middle of the mordent sign tells us that the mordent begins on the printed note and is rapidly followed by the note below, before returning to the original note (the fingering indicated will help to guide the student). The dynamic range is not necessarily wide, but the phrases must be tastefully shaped.

Study in A minor

Stephen Heller (1813–1888)

Key: A Minor

Relative Key: C Major

Here, the indication is not just *Allegro* (fast and lively), but also *con brio* (with vigour), suggesting that the tempo and character of this piece is exhilarating. With this in mind, the piece should have a feel of 1-in-a-bar. The brisk quaver-patterns run from left hand to right (or vice versa) and the transfer from one hand to the other should sound even and seamless. Although the tempo is quick, the fingerwork must be controlled and steady, avoid rushing and be sure to pick up the fingers to avoid blurring. Both hands frequently move to new hand positions and it is important to map out these changes of position (slowly to begin) to ensure efficiency in later performance. Count bars 15–16 (and similar bars) carefully, giving these tied-minims their full value, and similarly, count the rests carefully in the closing bars, as these are often misjudged in exam performance! *Tenuto* markings and accented notes will add rhythmic definition and character; dynamic detail will add further dramatic effect.

Stephen Heller was a Hungarian pianist, teacher and composer. He wrote exclusively for the piano (more than 150 works), and was a master-composer of lyrico-poetic pieces.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade V

The Ocean

Ailbhe McDonagh

Key: G sharp Minor, ending in B Major

Relative Key: B Major

A flowing tempo is needed to convey the 'soaring' effect here, the composer has given a metronome mark, though slightly slower or quicker tempi are also possible. This piece must have legato-pedal throughout, even though pedal changes are not indicated (each change of harmony will require a pedal-change). For the right-hand chords, always project the top note to bring out the melodic shape of each phrase. The quavers of the left hand (bars 17–32) can easily become intrusive and it is important to control these notes, always listen carefully to the balance between melody and accompaniment and adjust when necessary. From bars 29–34 the right-hand melody should be played an octave higher than it is written. In bars 33–34 hold onto the sustained notes for their full value. From bar 35, the left hand moves to the treble clef. At this point, both hands have quaver-pattern, but the melodic line still belongs to the right hand; project the top notes of the right hand whilst adopting a light touch for all thumb-notes. The composer has indicated a wide dynamic range to add colour and effect. In the final bar, the chord can be spread (starting with the lowest note and moving upwards), and hold this bar a little longer to let the sound die away at the end.

Ailbhe McDonagh began composing at an early age, winning prizes for composition at Feis Ceoil. Her first piece was published in 2002, after winning the RIAM Composition Competition for students under the age of 18. In 2017 she released two books of piano compositions, 'It's a Piano Thing' (books 1 and 2), published by Boosey and Hawkes. Since then she has been commissioned to compose for various performing artists and festivals worldwide. Ailbhe teaches cello at the RIAM.

March of the Lead Soldiers

Genari Karganov (1858–1890)

Key: A Major (Trio section is in D Major)

Relative Key: F sharp Minor (relative of D Major is B Minor)

While the tempo does not need to be overly quick (*Non troppo presto* means 'not too fast'), a pulse must be strictly adhered to throughout, to achieve a march-like feel. Use of metronome is advisable from the early stages, in order to maintain a strict tempo. Dotted-rhythms are an important feature throughout, and these need to be precisely executed each time, this rhythmic feature will add a briskness and energy to the character of the piece. Take note that the left hand shifts between treble and bass clefs throughout the first page of the piece. In bars 2–4 (and again later in the piece) the left hand must lift the fingers rapidly to play the repeated notes in time with the rhythmic pattern. Note that the trio section moves to the key of D Major, but the tempo does not slow for this section, the opening tempo of the piece must be maintained all the way. In the trio section, the left hand introduces a melodic line which must be both singing (*cantando*) and *legato*. The accompanying right-hand chords can be short and light. From bar 26–33 the roles reverse and the right hand takes over the melody, the balance between melody and chords should adapt accordingly. Observe all articulation and dynamic detail to add contrast and colour, and always shape the phrases. The Da Capo must be played in this piece.

Genari Karganov was a Russian composer of Armenian descent. He studied with Carl Reinecke (amongst others), later becoming a professor of piano in Tbilisi. He composed mainly for the piano, most of his works were educational in nature.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade V

Two-Part Invention BWV 779

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Key: F Major

Relative Key: D Minor

Firstly, it is important that the student understands that both hands are of equal importance. The writing is contrapuntal, meaning that the right- and left-hands are independent of each other, but they are combined through use of the same material. For the two hands to knit together, a lot of separate-hands work will be needed first, to ensure that each hand is independently secure (for intricate fingerwork like this it is also important to establish a fingering pattern and stick to it). The semiquavers require clarity and light fingers to avoid a laboured feel. Tonal colour and shaping of phrases will help to enhance the lively character; the tempo does not need to be very fast, but this piece should have energy.

Johann Sebastian Bach is generally regarded as one of the greatest composers in the history of Western music. As well as his orchestral music and compositions for various instruments and voice, he wrote extensively for organ and other keyboard instruments; the genres of canon and fugue are often present in his works.

To a Wild Rose

Edward MacDowell (1860–1908)

Key: A Major

Relative Minor: F sharp Minor

The beauty of this piece is in its simplicity, the content is very straightforward: the shape of the melodic line, accompanied by warm changes of harmonic colour carry the sentiment here. The chords of the left hand require gentleness and control, and clean pedalling is essential for the changes of harmony in each bar. The melody needs to sing, and phrases must be beautifully shaped with phrase-endings carefully tapered. The dynamic level very briefly reaches *f* at bar 25, but the overall colour of this piece is quiet and understated. For smaller hands, the stretchy left-hand chord at bar 37 can be spread. In bars 40–41 the pedal is held across these bars in order to sustain the tied note of the melodic line, as the right hand will need to move to a lower position to play the harmony beneath. This must not feel rushed, the phrases need to breathe. The closing bars can gradually slow down as the piece dies away...

American composer Edward MacDowell (1860–1908) was a composer and pianist. He is especially known for his piano pieces in smaller forms. Many of his works have literary or pictorial associations.

Ice-Dance

John McLachlan (b.1964)

Key: Slightly ambiguous, but has an A Minor tonality

Relative Key: C Major

Rhythmic detail is important here, as the same rhythmic pattern recurs throughout the piece and it is important to establish this detail from the start. Practice clapping the rhythm of the left hand to become accustomed to the syncopated feel of the tied notes. Note the word 'dance' in the title, indicating that it needs a sense of movement and flow, the composer has suggested a suitable metronome mark. For $\frac{12}{8}$ it must have a feel of 4 beats-in-a-bar, each beat has the value of a dotted-crotchet. Both hands should adopt a *legato* feel, and the pedal detail will also help to create a connected line and a 'blues' feel to the dance. For the right-hand chords, map out the pattern for the hand, and aim to give a little more focus to the top note of each chord, as this will help to shape each phrase. Dynamic markings range from *pp* to *f*, so there is plenty of room to explore a range of tonal colours. Count the closing bars carefully, and hold the final chord for its value, there is always a temptation to cut it short...

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade V

Sonatina Op. 36 No. 3, 1st movement

Muzio Clementi (1752–1832)

Key: C Major

Relative Key: A Minor

A lively character and energetic tempo is needed to bring this sonatina movement to life. Nimble fingerwork is necessary for the semiquaver passages, with tidy and even distribution. As the student begins to increase the tempo, the semiquavers can become lighter in touch, to avoid labouring these passages. Articulation detail is indicated and will enhance the style, and dynamic contrasts will also help to bring out the spirited character of the piece. The left hand should never become too heavy or intrusive; it remains a continuous, but understated support to the right-hand melody throughout. In bars 18–23 (and similar bars) keep the left-hand thumbs light, as these repeated notes can easily protrude. The *staccato* notes can be light and crisp throughout, to contrast with the lyricism of the *legato* phrases. For any student who is unable to manage the page the page turns, it is possible to photocopy the additional pages to use for exam purposes (though the original must always be present in the exam room).

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade VI

LIST A

Fugue in G Minor TWV 30:21

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767)

Key: G Minor

Relative Key: B flat Major

As fugues go, this one is quite straightforward and is a good way to introduce fugue playing to a student. An important starting point is to explain the concept of counterpoint: two or more independent lines of equal importance that are combined in a musical composition. Fugal writing is an example of contrapuntal writing, it is characterised by the repetition of its main theme (known as the 'subject'). This fugue has two lines (or voices), the subject material is introduced by the right hand in bar 1, and is imitated by the left hand in bar 2. This interplay is repeated throughout the piece, as the two hands weave around the subject and develop the thematic material. Every time the subject returns it should be clearly announced or projected. Articulation detail is indicated and will contribute to the stylistic effect, it will also help to bring the *Allegro* character to life. Lean on each of the *tenuto* markings to bring definition to the syncopated rhythms. Clarity of fingerwork is important, and the semiquavers must be delicate and even in delivery. Dynamic detail is also given as a guide to the overall shape of the piece, it must have colour and contrast.

LIST A

Suite in G HWV 441, Aria

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

Key: G Major

Relative Key: E Minor

Tidy and nimble fingers are needed for this piece, as *Presto* indicates a tempo faster than *Allegro*. While the faster fingerwork is directed at the right hand, the left-hand material contains light, dancing quavers to counterbalance the busyness of the semiquaver passages. Evenness and delicacy of touch is important to the semiquavers, if played too heavy they can cause the pace to drag and the character can lose its energy. In bars 8, 12 and 20 you will notice demisemiquaver note values; these bars would usually indicate trills, but here they have been written out to guide the student. Dynamic detail has been suggested, the addition of colour and shape will greatly enhance the overall effect.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade VI

LIST B

Sonata in G Hob XVI: G1, 1st movt

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

Key: G Major

Relative Minor: E Minor

Agile fingers and a spirited character are necessary to bring this sonata movement to life. From the opening upbeat, the demisemiquavers require clarity and lightness of touch. Articulation detail will help to bring musical shape, bright *staccato* will give energy and the *tenuto* markings will show the direction of phrases. The left hand plays more of an accompaniment figure and any semiquaver passages must be light (the thumb can be particularly intrusive), so as not to overpower the melodic content of the right hand. Observe the rhythmic detail with care, to ensure that all note-groupings are clearly identifiable and that a steady metre can be maintained throughout. Aim to shape the phrases, and introduce dynamic variation to bring added colour and interest to this lively work.

LIST B

Sonata in D Op. 5 No. 2, 2nd movt

Johann Christian Bach (1735–1782)

Key: G Major

Relative Key: E Minor

In this movement, the articulation detail plays an important role in the expression of both melody and accompaniment lines. Lightly detached *staccato* detail would serve the style and character well, avoid a clipped or abrupt approach. The right hand carries the melody and needs to sing, with expressive shaping of each phrase. Although the tempo is a modest *Andante*, the movement of *staccato* semiquavers in the opening bars of the left-hand accompaniment give this a feeling of motion. These semiquavers must be delicate so as not to overpower the right-hand melody. Approach the trills (and any demisemiquaver movement) with a light touch, this decorative detail should not hinder the rhythmic shape or upset the overall pace. Tonal variety will further enhance the overall picture, there is room for plenty of contrast throughout and the spread chords of bars 21 and 48 can be delivered with dramatic flourish. A small *rall.* will bring the movement to an elegant ending.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade VI

LIST C

Prelude in B Minor Op. 28 No. 6

Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849)

Key: B Minor

Relative Key: D Major

This piece must have a *legato* feel throughout, and a *cantabile* tone in the cello-like melody of the left hand is needed. Gently pulsating chords in the right hand should create a sympathetic accompaniment, the wrists must remain relaxed to ensure good tone quality whilst sensitively balancing the accompaniment with the lamenting melodic line. The tempo is not fast (*Lento* means slow), but the constant quaver-pulse of the chords should feel like a mournful heartbeat throughout. This piece requires legato pedal, but where possible it is the job of the fingers to ensure a connection between the notes of each phrase. Every phrase must have shape and expression, and use of rubato will allow for breathing space, and will enhance the overall musical effect.

LIST C

Cool Daddy O'

Philip Martin (b. 1947)

Key: C Major

Relative Minor: A Minor

The tempo is unhurried here, the character of the piece is conveyed through the rhythmic detail and the rhythm needs to be executed with precision. The left hand begins alone with a simple 'boogie' bass line, take care when setting the tempo here, as it is a common mistake for the player to start too fast and suddenly slow the pace when the right hand enters at bar 3...always think ahead. The left-hand crotchets can be played in a detached manner (not too short!), the accents indicate a slight stress on each note, and *simile* indicates that this articulation should continue throughout the piece. At bar 13, *pesante* indicates an even heavier touch, as the momentum and drive of the piece builds, but remember that the bass line is not the dominant line and it must not overpower the right-hand material. Dotted rhythms and triplets are an important feature throughout the piece, and it is important to ensure that the student can comfortably alternate between these rhythmic groups (this detail can be practised away from the piano, with clapping exercises). A *tremolo* effect is indicated at bars 15 and 16 (and again later in the piece), to achieve this effect the fingers should alternate rapidly between the written notes (this is a colourful effect often used in jazz music). The composer has included a lot of articulation, phrasing and dynamic detail here, and these will embellish the overall character greatly.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade VII

LIST A

Sonata in G, 2nd movt

Benedetto Marcello (1686–1739)

Key: G Major

Relative Key: E Minor

A lively pace is needed to bring this to life, note the ♩ time signature, it must have a feel of 2-in-a-bar. The character is playful, the fingerwork at times intricate and the semiquaver passages need to sparkle. There are changes of hand position for both left and right hands, and it is important to map out this detail in advance to ensure timely manoeuvres from one position to another. Articulation is an important stylistic and expressive feature of music from this period, this detail must be considered. Approach this with a light touch (even the *f* passages are bright, but never aggressive or harsh), and enhance with tonal colour and shape for greater musical effect.

LIST A

Prelude BWV 862

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Key: A Flat Major

Relative: F Minor

From the first bar, the energy of this piece is palpable and this opening theme recurs throughout the prelude. The early stages of learning can be tricky with Bach (persevere with it and you will be rewarded), and it is important to establish a solid finger pattern from the start. This is also a piece that is best taken in small chunks to begin (take no more than 4 bars at a time and secure the notes/patterns) and later this can be pieced together gradually. Articulation detail is crucial to the overall effect: elegant slurs and crisp staccato will enhance the character. There are one or two tricky semiquaver passages to negotiate, isolate these areas and work on small sections at a time. The mordents (bars 38, 40 etc.) are a decorative feature and should not impede the overall pulse. Enhance the overall character with tonal variation and musical phrasing.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade VII

LIST B

Sonatina in D Op. 36 No. 6, 1st movt

Muzio Clementi (1752–1832)

Key: D Major

Relative Minor B Minor

Allegro con spirito is indicated at the start, and the character of this movement demands a lively character and brilliant fingerwork. The right-hand melodic detail is varied in content, moving between playful and energetic passages to moments of lyricism and expression, there are also plenty fast scale passages intermingled throughout. Broadly speaking the left hand plays the role of accompaniment, incorporating both broken octave and arpeggiated quaver passages to support the right-hand melodic line. Articulation markings are indicated and will enhance the musical shape of the movement, dynamic detail will also enrich the overall effect and allow the performer to demonstrate a wide range of colour and personality.

LIST B

Sonata in D K311, 2nd movt

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Key: G Major

Relative Key: E Minor

Lyrical phrasing is central to the slow and expressive character of this sonata movement. The style and content can be likened to an operatic aria, consequently it must have poise and beauty of tone throughout. Every phrase must have shape, the ornaments must be played with delicacy and the staccato detail should be approached with a gentle and sensitive touch. The left hand supports the right-hand melody, and small details such as the holding of sustained notes, articulation, light semiquavers and clarity of touch are all important considerations for the accompaniment part. For the melody, the tone must be singing (whether the dynamic is *p* or *f*) and aim to follow the rise and fall of each phrase to find the musical shape. Pedal detail is indicated on the music and will enhance the colour and help to sustain the line: it is important that pedal changes are clean, as blurring is not the desired effect here. Listen to Mozart arias (easily found on youtube!) to gain inspiration and understanding of how a singer connects the notes into musical phrases, we need to try to recreate the same effect using our fingers...

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade VII

LIST C

Prélude Op. 10

Mel Bonis (1858–1937)

Key: E flat Major

Relative Key: C Minor

Beauty of tone, shaping and rubato are important features throughout this piece. The left hand opens with a melody that is gentle, but singing. The fingering that is indicated will help the left hand to create a legato effect with the fingers, though the pedal detail will sustain any notes that cannot be held. Add shape and colour to each phrase, and avoid rushing the phrase-endings. Always listen to the balance between melody and accompaniment, and adjust accordingly when the right hand takes over the melody and the left hand becomes the accompaniment. An intensity builds throughout this piece, and by bar 14 it will be necessary to 'stretch' the time (allow a slight rit.) to facilitate the RH octaves and create a build-up to the climax of the piece at bar 15, before the piece gradually returns to the tranquil character of the opening material once again. The indication in the final bars (*slargando*) indicates a slowing down, as the piece draws to a conclusion.

LIST C

An Evening at the Village

Béla Bartók (1881–1945)

Key: E minor (though not indicated in the key signature)

Relative Key: G Major

This piece is a tale of two halves. A slow, expressive song, interspersed with lively and rhythmic interjections bring two contrasting ideas together. As with all of his compositions, Bartók is meticulous with his detail. A key signature is not included, but we are in the key of E minor. The piece opens with a plaintive melody for the right hand (the influence of folk music can clearly be heard here), and while the composer has given licence for some use of rubato, it is still important to ensure that both metre and rhythmic detail are adhered to as the piece moves between different time signatures. A legato feel is necessary to the character, and the sustained chords of the left-hand accompaniment must be heard to support the right hand melodic line. By contrast, the *Vivo* sections (with life, vigour) are energetic and spirited. Bartók has indicated his own metronome marking for the slower and quicker sections, the quicker being quite an ambitious pace. It is possible to take this at a slightly more conservative pace, but it is important to bring out the *scherzando* character (jokingly) with short and light *staccato* detail and rhythmic definition. These sections should be without rubato, the counting is strict, the tenuto and accented notes precise in execution. The pedal markings are Bartók's. The slower, expressive melody returns throughout the piece, but the accompaniment that underlies the melody changes each time, giving a different harmonic colour each time. In the final presentation, both right and left hands have the melody in unison, the chords (also played by both right and left hands) must not overpower the melodic line. The pedal detail will help to sustain these harmonies and bring added colour to the overall effect, as the piece fades away to nothing.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade VIII

LIST A

Allemande, French Suite No. 5 BWV 816

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Key: G Major

Relative Key: E Minor

Allemande is a dance and it needs continuity and flow. There are three separate lines moving throughout the piece; the treble (melody) and bass lines are clear, the middle line weaves in and out between the two outer parts bringing both interplay and harmonic colour. It is important to have an awareness of each line separately and it is worthwhile to practise the bass/treble, bass/middle, treble/middle parts independently. This Allemande is lyrical and largely legato, but clarity is an important feature of music from the Baroque era; avoid holding onto notes unnecessarily and keep the texture clean and transparent. Sing the melodic line, follow the contour of the line to find the shape within each phrase and add tonal colour and shape to enhance the overall effect. Approach trills and mordents with light fingers, these ornamental features should not overpower or impede the overall melodic shape or pulse of the dance.

LIST A

Fantaisie TWV 33:8

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767)

Key: G Minor

Relative Key: B flat Major

This piece has a bustling character and must have a sense of vigour and drive from the start. The semiquaver passages must be clean and light, the staccato detail crisp and energetic. Articulation detail is important to the overall style and effect, and a couple of options are suggested on the music to offer stylistic guidance, the crotchets can be played in a detached manner. The triplet figures (bars 16–17 and 42–43 are trills which have been written out for convenience, approach these rhythmically and with light fingers). The left hand moves between treble and bass clefs throughout, and it is important for the each new hand position to be carefully mapped out in advance to avoid unnecessary impediment to the overall pulse. Tonal colour will add a further dimension and purpose to the music.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade VIII

LIST B

Fantasia KV397

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Key: D Minor

Relative Key: F Major

Mozart has created a narrative with three separate sections, each one differing in both character and tempo. Note the C time signature and remember that the piece must have a feeling of 2-in-a-bar. The opening section (*Andante*) comprises broken chords, there is no melodic line as such, it should begin at a quiet murmur, with each change of harmony creating tension and a subtle expansion of dynamic level, before gradually decreasing again to conclude the introductory section in hushed tones. The *Adagio* section is slow and expressive, here the melody must sing. There are two layers to the left-hand accompaniment: the repeated chords must be quiet and controlled, while the underlying minims must be sustained. Rhythmic detail should be closely observed as there are occasional subtle rhythmic details that can be easily missed (pay particular attention to semiquaver and demisemiquaver content to ensure accuracy of delivery). The *Adagio* section is interspersed with dramatic moments of virtuosic fingerwork, clear and brilliant passages must be demonstrated to contrast with the lament of the *Adagio* melody. The *Allegretto* section is in D Major and it is important to approach this with a more lively and light-hearted sense of character. The *alberti* semiquavers must be light and even while the melodic line maintains a lyrical quality. Throughout this work, articulation detail and pedal are important to the overall effect and the melody must have shape and colour.

LIST B

Finale, Sonata in F Hob XVI No. 23

Joseph Haydn (1732– 1809)

Key: F Major

Relative Key: D Minor

A zippy pace is required for the lively and energetic character of this movement, it doesn't sit still at all and there must be a sense of forward motion throughout. Ultimately, it is the semiquaver passages that will dictate the overall tempo, clarity of fingerwork is important and lightness of touch will facilitate faster fingers. The articulation detail will contribute to the overall style and effect, take note of the slurs and staccato markings. The left hand shifts between bass and treble clefs throughout, largely it supports the right hand melodic line though there are also moments of playful interaction between the two hands. Dabs of pedal (where indicated) will enhance the colour, but avoid over-use of pedal as it will mask the articulation detail. Shaping of phrases and tonal colour will add further dimension and lustre.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade VIII

LIST C

Absence

Fanny Robinson (1831–1879)

Key: B Minor

Relative Key: D Major

This is a lament, a slow tempo with sensitive rubato will be needed to convey the emotional weight of this piece. Cantabile tone and a well-connected melodic line are essential here, the phrases must be tastefully shaped and phrase-endings expressively tapered. A sympathetic chordal accompaniment must be carefully controlled to nourish the melody without overpowering, and legato pedal will help to sustain the harmonic thread throughout. From bar 17 the melody is announced in octaves (at times the octaves are divided between right and left hands and must be carefully coordinated), always ensure a singing top line. Take care that the sound does not become too aggressive with the indication of *pesante*, this indicates more weight behind the sound as the passion and intensity builds, the sound should never become harsh. In bar 32 the *stretto* indicates a slight moving on of the tempo, then the *smorzando* at bar 35 then implies that the music begins to gradually become slower and softer, as the closing bars of the piece die away.

LIST C

Rêverie

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

Key: F Major

Relative Key: D Minor

As the title suggests, the mood of this piece has a dreamlike quality. An undercurrent of gently running left-hand quavers support the right-hand melody, these quavers are a continuous feature throughout the piece with arpeggiated figures that ascend and descend the keyboard. Both hands must have a legato feel, the pedal will help to connect the notes where the fingers/hands are unable to reach. Where possible, the connection of notes should be made with the fingers, the suggested fingering will help to facilitate this legato feel. There is a recurring '3 against 4' rhythmic passage (eg. bar 5) which can be tricky when first encountered, this must be carefully negotiated (starting at a very slow pace to achieve an accurate distribution of notes and gradually building up speed). At bar 35 the melodic interest shifts to the left hand while the right hand takes over the quaver movement, it is important to listen closely and adjust the balance of melody and accompaniment accordingly. With the introduction of a chordal section at bar 51 it is important to balance the chords carefully, aiming for the most focus on the treble line. Keep a close eye out for changes of clef throughout the piece, and also changes of key signature. The opening melodic idea returns at bar 76, but this time the melody is divided between the right and left hands. Try to achieve a seamless transfer from one hand to the other, this area can be tricky to coordinate, but it must sound effortless in delivery. Pedal is an important feature in this piece and pedal-changes are indicated, slight clouding of harmonies will still be audible but this is a feature of music from the Impressionist period. That said, remember that the mood of the piece is dreamlike and aim to avoid an over-blurring or harmony, lightness of touch in the movement of quavers will help to minimize this. While there are some dramatic moments that require a *f* sound, much of this piece requires gentle playing and a feeling of serenity and calm, aim to explore the softer tones and subtlety in the shaping of phrases. Rubato is very much a feature of this music and should also be explored.
