

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Elementary

First Steps

Ailbhe McDonagh

Key: C Major

A bouncy *staccato* will help to bring the character to life in this sprightly piece, keeping the wrists nice and relaxed at all times. The $\frac{4}{4}$ time signature indicates that there are four beats in every bar, and careful counting of the left- and right-hand crotchets will help to maintain a steady beat. Take care at bars 2, 4 and 5 where each bar ends on a crotchet rest, this silent beat has the same value as a crotchet note, and the pulse must remain steady. Dynamic markings are included, and will add colour and contrast to the overall effect.

Up and Down

Amanda Fitzpatrick

Key: C Major

A *legato* line will suit this elegant piece, aim to sing out the melody. Here, the $\frac{3}{4}$ time signature indicates 3 beats in each bar, and this piece should have a gentle flow. Take care with the transition between crotchets and quavers in the right hand, to make sure the quavers are evenly divided. Quavers travel at double the speed of crotchets, so these notes can have a lighter touch, to avoid any unwanted heaviness. Use the *crescendo* and *diminuendo* indications to achieve a nice long increase/decrease in sound, and add shape to the lines. The piece should end gently, and in those final bars, be sure to hold the dotted minims for their full value, the timing must be accurate to the very end.

Dreaming

Paul Chawke

Key: F Major

Andante means 'at a walking pace', and the title suggests a sleepy character, so avoid rushing this piece. It is like a duet between the two hands, with the left hand answering each right hand phrase. With this in mind, it is important to listen to each hand, and to try and produce a good balance between them. Take note of the slurs in bar 5, remember that the first note of each slur should connect to the second note, and the second note is then lightly released. The dynamic level should not become too loud, but there is still room to shape each phrase beautifully.

The Ostrich

Leslie Fly

Key: C Major

The two hands begin in unison here, a rich tone will give this nice depth. The opening line must be *legato* and steady (this material is repeated in bars 9–12). The slurred notes in bars 5 and 7 bring in a contrasting articulation (and a change of dynamic). Ensure that the first note connects to the second note of the slur in the right hand each time, whilst maintaining a *legato* left hand at the same time. Take time to prepare the left-hand chord at bar 15, it is important that both notes of the chord sound together. Be careful also, to hold the right-hand tied note from bar 15–16, to give this note its full value, and to keep the connection of sound as the left hand changes position in those closing bars.

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The Sad Piper

Réamonn Keary

Key: D Minor without key signature

The melody has a sorrowful character (as the title indicates!), it needs to have a sense of *legato*, and each phrase must have shape. At *Andante* (at a walking pace), the tempo is not hurried, but it needs to have direction nonetheless. The chords of the left hand must be gentle, though it easier to play these louder to begin, until the hand gets used to the shape of the chords and can play both notes exactly together each time.

Cat and Mouse

Caoimhe Ní Riain

Key: C Major

Here, it is important that the student understands the value of both crotchets and quavers to ensure a steady $\frac{4}{4}$ metre throughout. The piece opens with a quaver-pattern that passes from the left hand to the right, these quavers must be evenly distributed, with a smooth transfer between the hands. The *staccato* crotchets of the right hand can be short and crisp, to contrast with the longer note values of the left hand (minims). The dynamics must also vary, to demonstrate the timid, *p* character of the opening line, and the gradual build towards the *f* character at the end of the piece. Be sure to hold the final semibreve notes for their full value, to bring this piece to a close.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Preliminary

Happy Birthday

arr. Tamara Niekludow

Key: F Major

We have all sung this tune many times, we know the shape of the phrases and the appropriate tempo to achieve the desired effect. The melodic line requires a *legato* touch, and it needs to have a singing tone. The left-hand chords provide the harmonic support, ensure that the notes of each chord sound exactly together, but mind that they don't overshadow the melody. The dotted rhythms must be exact, count this detail carefully each time. Be sure to hold the *fermata* (pause) for longer at bar 6, but also observe the *a tempo* sign and return to the original pace. Dynamic details are not included, but aim to build towards celebratory climax on line 2.

Clowning Around

Amanda Fitzpatrick

Key: C Major

A steady pulse (four beats in every bar!) and a bouncy *staccato* are needed to capture the character of this piece. The notes of the right-hand chords must sound exactly together. To secure the hand-shape for each chord, practise initially by holding these chords for longer, with firm fingers firm and loose wrists. Then, gradually lighten the touch and shorten the notes to achieve an energetic *staccato* effect. Dynamic detail will bring added character to the overall effect.

Ducks on the Pond

Agnieszka Bialek

Key: F Major

Note that both hands are positioned in the bass clef throughout this piece. The right hand must maintain a *legato* line throughout, while the left hand accompanies with light, *staccato* chords. The two notes of each chord must sound exactly together, it easier to practise holding these chords for longer at the start, until this skill feels more secure. Keep the wrist nice and relaxed, but the fingers nice and firm to ensure that both notes sound. Once the student is more confident with this, the chords can be detached. Meanwhile, the right hand melody needs a singing tone and nicely shaped phrases. Be sure to hold all tied notes for their full value, in particular bars 9–10, where the lower note of the chord is tied, but the upper notes are moving. Try to make the most of the contrasts between *mp* and *f* to add further colour.

Magic

Paul Chawke

Key: G Major

Articulation detail is an important feature of this piece, and the markings should be closely observed to contrast the *legato*, *staccato* and slurred notes. *Vivace* indicates a quick and energetic tempo, and the rests must be carefully counted to ensure a steady 3-in-a-bar throughout. Accented notes are also featured throughout the piece (eg. bars 2, 4 etc.), and these notes should be played with more emphasis and importance (but avoid hitting the piano!). Along with all of this, the dynamic contrasts will add colour and dramatic effect to the overall character.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Preliminary

Cat's Play

Daniela Rooney

Key: C Major

Slurs are an important feature for the right hand throughout this piece. The notes of each group must connect, and the final note of each slur is lightly released each time (avoid any bumps or accents here), and the wrists should remain supple throughout this movement. The right hand moves position in places, so be sure to map out the location of the notes to ensure a nice steady pace throughout. The left hand has few notes to play here, but the *staccato* crotchets should be played with a light bounce. The first note of bar 13 can be played by the right hand (the same note, 'D' is indicated for both hands but it is not necessary for both hands to play this note). Here, the two hands are moving in contrary motion, playing scale of 'C Major'. Aim to begin the scale quietly, and note-by-note, increase the volume to reach a *f* dynamic at the end of the line. Count two steady beats per bar all the way, and hold the final bar for its full value. A lively tempo is indicated, so aim for a flowing pace here.

Sad March

Bernard Geary

Key: D Minor

A steady beat is essential to any march, so be sure to count evenly from the start. The *staccato* notes should be observed in order to contrast with the minims played by the opposite hand, which must be held for their full value; make sure these chords are not overpowering. This march is quite sombre in character with the dynamic level ranging between *pp* and *mf* only, so avoid a forced tone. The quavers in bar 11 need momentum so try to avoid too much *rit.* at the beginning of the bar; a gradual slow-down will produce a greater effect. These quavers may need additional care to ensure that hands are co-ordinated. The final left-hand chord can be very soft, and remember to observe the pause mark; avoid releasing this chord too quickly as it will break the mood.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Primary

The Grand Old Duke of York

arr. Trudy Maguire

Key: G Major

A steady beat is essential for a march, but a manageable pace is also very important and in this case, the trickiest part of the piece (bars 14–17) should dictate the overall tempo for the student. More about this later, but let's start at the beginning. The piece opens with a simple, steady crotchet introduction, and the left hand maintains this steady beat for much of the piece. The upbeat to bar 5 introduces the melody; avoid emphasis on this upbeat, but try to be exact with the rhythm. The melodic line moves between quavers and semiquavers throughout, and it is a good idea to practise clapping these passages to ensure precise rhythmic delivery. Another somersault to the treble at bar 16, before returning again to the bass clef for the closing bars of the piece. These shifts of position are tricky, and must be carefully mapped out to ensure that they can be accomplished at a steady pace...consequently, the tempo that is managed in this area will determine the overall tempo of the piece. Dynamic and articulation details are included, and will enhance the character and shape of the piece.

City Spires

Leslie Fly

Key: G Major

A tempo marking is not indicated for this piece, but I would suggest *Andante* as a suitable pace. While speed is not a requirement here, the crotchets need to flow. *Legato* phrasing is an important feature for both hands in this piece, and a singing melodic line is necessary. Take note that the left hand moves to the treble clef from bars 5–18 in this piece. The left-hand chords in bars 5–8 should be gently played, so as not to overpower the right-hand melody. Observe the tied notes on the last line of the piece, these notes should be held, but not replayed. The use of pedal will help to sustain the harmony through these closing bars, though the use of pedal is optional here. The piece begins *f*, but gradually fades away towards the end, giving the student an opportunity to demonstrate a wide range of tonal colour, and shaping of phrases will also enhance the melody here.

Get up n' Go Blues

Darragh Gilleece

Key: C Major

This requires an energetic pace and character. Repetitive left-hand chords underpin this piece, and with a steady crotchet-beat, these chords will help the player to feel a strong sense of pulse throughout. For the right hand, practise clapping the rhythmic detail to ensure that it is accurate and precise (take note of the instruction that the rhythm is to be played strictly as written). Aim to project the melodic line, observe the notes marked with a *tenuto* (eg. bars 3, 5, 7 etc.) and lean a little more on these notes to give a stronger rhythmic impact. For the grace notes in bar 11, it is easier to begin by playing the grace note (or 'crushed 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.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Primary

Zebras Crossing

Réamonn Keary

Key: Atonal (not written in any key)

The upward stems indicate notes to be played with the right hand, and the notes with downward stems should be played with the left. The time signature indicates 3-beats-in-a-bar, and with continuous quaver-movement throughout, this must be steady at all times. The finger pattern moves between the right- and left-hands throughout, and the transitions from one hand to the other must connect seamlessly. While the two hands move in opposite directions on the piano, the pattern of movement is easy to follow, if the correct fingering is established from the start, and the notes should lie comfortably under the fingers. The tempo must flow to achieve the bustling character of the piece, and clean fingerwork is essential, or the effect will become blurry. Aim to explore different dynamic colours in this, culminating in a *f* flourish on the final line, to bring the piece to a dramatic end.

Melodie

Paul Zilcher

Key: F Major

Both hands must adopt a *legato* touch in this piece, and the right-hand melody must be lyrical in quality. The quavers of the left-hand accompaniment can easily become overpowering, and with this in mind, it is important to listen carefully to the balance between the two hands, making sure that a singing tone in the melody is nicely projected and shaped. At a *Moderato* tempo, this piece should have a gentle flow, without feeling rushed. *Crescendo* and *Diminuendo* signs are indicated, to help add shape to the phrases (< >). At bar 11, note that the left-hand notes move to the treble clef, and remain there until bar 15, observe (and count) all rests, where they occur. Aim to taper off the final notes, to bring the piece to a gentle close.

Nervous and Excited

Paul Chawke

Key: A Minor

With an *Allegro* tempo marking, the character of this piece must be lively and spirited. Articulation detail has been specifically indicated, and will embellish the overall effect greatly. In the opening line, the *staccato* quavers can be light and dainty, to contrast with the accented minim notes that follow. Later on, the *legato* phrasing must also be observed, and these notes can be more lyrical in quality. Observe the dynamics to add colour and drama, and count steadily all the way (especially bar 23, where there is a full bar of silence!). Hold the final chord for its value, it is marked *f* and accented, and must be played with aplomb.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade I

Chubby Hippo Blues

Barbara Arens

Key: G Major without key signature (any F's are natural, unless otherwise marked).

The tempo is not fast here, but it must be very steady, and the rhythmic detail must be exact. The left hand plays crotchet chords throughout, and these will help to maintain a strong pulse. Note that both left and right hands are written in the bass clef all the way, but avoid a heavy touch in the left hand as it can easily become overpowering. The melodic detail belongs to the right hand, the top note of each chord can be played with a little more 'ping'. Take care with the dotted-rhythms to ensure precise delivery each time. Watch out also for the introduction of triplet figures in bars 9–10. The three notes of each triplet must fit evenly into one crotchet beat. The *acciaccatura* notes in bars 2, 4 etc. (also called 'grace notes' or 'crushed notes') should not interfere with the steadiness of the crotchet beat. They are quick, light notes, played almost together with the main note, and they are intended as an embellishment.

Cello Melody

Réamonn Keary

Key: C Minor

Listen carefully to the balance between the melody and the accompaniment in this piece. With a warm and singing tone in the left-hand melody, the right hand must adopt a more gentle approach to the accompanying chords. The melodic line must be *legato*, the length of each phrase is indicated throughout, and remember to breathe between each phrase. The chords of the right hand must be carefully synchronised to ensure that the three notes of each chord sound exactly together. This requires a firmness in the fingers, whilst keeping the wrist loose, avoid a sharp *staccato* here, think of these chords as detached, rather than spikey. Shape each phrase to enhance the overall effect.

Sea Adventures

Agnieszka Bialek

Key: E Minor

A feel of 2-in-a-bar will give this piece the lilt it requires, and will help to achieve the lively character that is indicated (*Allegro*). The rhythmic detail is important, and should be played exactly as it is written, the rests must also be observed. The melodic detail begins in the right hand, and the dynamic and articulation detail will embellish the overall effect. Listen out for the balance between melody and accompaniment, especially on the third line, where the left hand takes over the melodic detail. Avoid any change of tempo at this point, a steady pace should be maintained throughout. A dab of pedal in the final bar will help to connect the left-hand chords, and embellish the overall colour.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade I

Sonatina

Anton Diabelli

Key: C Major

Allegretto is lively, but not as fast as *Allegro*, which makes this quite a manageable piece. The articulation marking in bars 1, 3, 5 etc. may look confusing, as it appears to indicate both *staccato* and legato slurring at the same time. This effect is intended to lie somewhere between the two, meaning that the notes are detached, but are not short or spikey...the overall character is elegant and poised, and this should be reflected in the articulation. Aim to shape each phrase (*crescendo* and *diminuendo* signs are suggested to indicate the shape of the phrases. The melodic interest lies with the right hand and should be clearly projected. Beware of overpowering left-hand quavers from bar 17, aim for a light touch to support (but not dominate) the right-hand melody. Add dynamic detail to further enhance the character.

Slithery Snake

Maria White

Key: C Major

Here, the notes are quite straightforward, but the rhythmic detail is tricky, and the dotted-rhythms (which feature throughout the piece) must be precise. *Leggiero* means lightly, so avoid digging into the notes (especially on the semiquavers), a lighter touch will help to achieve a flowing line. In bars 4 and 8, there are a couple of sneaky little triplet-figures in the bass clef; when playing these triplets, it is important that all three notes fit evenly into one beat. Observe the articulation detail carefully, especially the tied notes, as these create a syncopated rhythmic effect. Observe the rests carefully, and aim for a steady flow all the way through. The composer has written a lot of dynamics, and this detail will give the performer a chance to demonstrate a wide range of colour and variety.

Minuet

Henry Purcell

Key: A Minor

This is an elegant dance, and while it is not fast, it must have a sense of motion and flow. The left hand provides gentle harmonic support throughout (aim to hold all dotted-minims for their value), while the right-hand melody adopts a more lyrical line, with tasteful shaping of phrases. In Baroque music, composers/performers used articulation as an expressive tool; suggested articulation is included in this edition as a guide to the performer, though other options can also be explored. Try to think of the *staccato* notes as detached, rather than too short and spikey, to be in-keeping with graceful character of the dance.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade II

Lullaby

Elijah Thomas Burke

Key: F Major


As the title suggests, this piece is calm and gentle in character. The melody must sing, and both hands require a *legato* touch (otherwise, it will become disjointed and lose its lyrical quality). Note that the left hand switches between the treble and bass clefs throughout. The notes of the left-hand chords must be played exactly together (firm fingers and loose wrists!), and the student must listen carefully to ensure that the chords are quiet enough to support the melody, without overpowering it. The melodic line must be shaped, the dynamics focus more on the quieter qualities of the instrument, but there is still room to explore a range of colour and expressive qualities.

Paws

Maria White

Key: C Minor

Rhythmic precision is key to playing this piece successfully, and the dotted-rhythms must be exact. Although the tempo marking says *slow and mischievous*, avoid playing this too slowly or the rhythmic detail becomes more difficult to execute (the dotted rhythms should sound snappy). For the grace notes (bars 3, 5 etc.), begin by playing the two notes together as a chord, later the notes can be separated

slightly. Be sure to lift for all rests, lean a little more on the notes marked with a tenuto () , and observe all the dynamic markings to bring out the humorous character of this piece.

Serenade Op. 183, No. 1

Carl Reinecke

Key: F Major

As the title suggests, the melody of this piece is song-like and must be played with a *cantabile* touch (in a singing style). Note that the piece doesn't begin on the first beat of the bar, and avoid too much emphasis on the opening note (each phrase begins in the same manner). The quavers of the left hand must be gentle and controlled throughout, keep the 'thumb notes' especially light, as they have a tendency to poke out. The metronome mark indicated is quite good, it is not fast, but has a sense of motion nonetheless. Remember that *Dolce* means 'sweetly', and keep this in mind when balancing the melody and accompaniment. Aim to shape the phrases, and add tonal colour to further enhance.

Study in C

Hermann Berens

Key: C Major

Glittering fingerwork is needed to bring these scale passages to life! This study is excellent practice for developing clarity and fluency in scale-playing. It requires a lively tempo, but this detail can only be achieved once the notes and finger-patterns are securely learned, and each hand is independently secure. As the tempo increases, the touch should become lighter to allow the semiquavers to sparkle. Observe the *staccato* notes to contrast with the *legato* scale passages. Take note also, that from the upbeat to bar 7 to the end of the piece, the right hand is played an octave higher than written. Dynamics will enhance greatly.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade II

Playing Pranks

Agnieszka Bialek

Key: F Major

With a $\frac{3}{8}$ time signature, this piece needs to have a lilting feel of 2-in-a-bar, the rhythmic detail must be carefully counted throughout. Both hands adopt a *legato* touch, and the right-hand melodic line must project. Take note of all tied notes (bars 3–4, 7–8 etc.) as these create a syncopated rhythmic effect. The tempo is not fast, but it must remain steady all the way to the finishing chords (marked *Lento*). Dynamic detail will enhance the character, and observe the phrase markings throughout.

Minuet in F, K2

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Key: F Major

For Grade II level, this is a very straightforward piece to play. It is a graceful and merry dance, and it needs a steady, but flowing pace. The structure of this minuet is easy to follow, as it divides clearly into 4-bar phrases all the way through. Rhythmically, the detail is also easy to follow, but watch out for one triplet figure at bar 7, and ensure that these three notes are evenly played. The melodic line needs to sing, and the phrases must be elegantly shaped. The articulation detail is an integral part of the style and character, connect the notes of each slur before lightly releasing the final note. Think of the *staccato* notes as detached, rather than too short or spikey. Observe the pause at bar 20 (◡) and hold onto this note for a little longer, but resume the original tempo again from bar 21. A small *diminuendo* and *rit.* will bring the dance to a tasteful close.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade III

Charleston

Aidan Duggan

Key: G Major

This piece can be played at a comfortable pace, but the fingerwork must be immaculate and the articulation detail must be observed carefully. There is a bit of choreography for the hands as the left and right hands cross to different positions; at the start it is important to map out these position changes to ensure security, which will help the student to manage a steady performance, without hesitations or gaps. Take care with the rhythmic detail, watching out especially for the syncopated rhythms (eg. bars 3 and 7), and also the dotted rhythms (eg. bars 9, 10 etc.) to ensure that this detail is exact. Enjoy the dynamic contrasts, and aim for a light, bouncing *staccato* to bring out energy and character.

The Moth

Samuil Maikapar

Key: D Minor

Dainty and delicate fingers are needed to make this sparkle. Both hands are written in the treble clef throughout, and the dynamic level reaches *mf* at its loudest, so the intention here is for the player to experiment with lighter and softer tones to mimic the fluttering of a moth. The semiquavers must be light and even, and the playing must be steady and rhythmical. Articulation detail will add to the character, and dynamics will also add colour and shade. Aim for a flowing pace, the lightness of touch is easier to accomplish at a quicker tempo. Observe the *poco rit.* and \frown markings at bars 15–16, but return immediately to the opening speed where *a tempo* is indicated. Allow the closing notes to flutter away, but hold the final chord for an extended beat, to acknowledge the: \frown at the very end.

Tranquility

John McLachlan

Key: F sharp Major

A gentle, quiet and calm picture belies the mood of this piece, while the metronome markings indicate a suitable tempo. It requires the use of legato-pedal throughout, but with only one pedal-change at the beginning of each bar, this follows a straightforward pattern. Aim for clean pedal-changes, to avoid unwanted cloudiness catching in the harmony. The pattern of the left-hand notes is simple and repetitive, there are very few chord-changes throughout. The melodic line belongs to the right hand, and while the pedal will help to connect the harmonies, it is important for the fingers to maintain a *legato* touch throughout. The dynamic level doesn't rise above *mf*, allowing the player to focus on creating softer colours on the piano. Take note of the tempo changes, the composer has given specific instruction as to when/how these occur. Also, note that the right hand moves to the bass clef for the closing bars, and it must cross over the left hand to play the closing notes, as the piece gradually dies away...

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade III

Cherry Blossom

Benjamin Liu

Key: E Major

Take note that both hands are written in the treble clef throughout the piece. While this must be pedalled throughout, avoid holding onto notes with the fingers as this will create too much blurriness and unevenness of touch. A flowing pace is needed, and light fingerwork to evoke the image of cherry blossoms floating in the breeze. Listen closely to the balance between the two hands, and ensure that the right-hand melodic line projects above the left-hand accompaniment. Dynamic variation and shaping of phrases will enrich the colour and character. The final three bars indicate a *rit.* but avoid becoming too slow, too soon...this must be a gradual slowing to the end. Note that the final bar indicates the right-hand notes are played an octave higher than written, and aim for a light and delicate ending to bring this to a suitable conclusion.

Benjamin Liu (age 9) is the winner of the 2023 RIAM Composition Competition.

Sonata in F Hob XVI No. 9, 3rd mvt

Joseph Haydn

Key: F Major

The *scherzo* tempo marking tells us that a humorous, playful character is the desired effect. The tempo is lively and the semiquavers must be nimble and precise. Take note of the changes of hand position (and clef) for the left hand throughout. Observe the *staccato* markings for the left hand quavers, these must be light and crisp, to support the right-hand melodic line, and from bar 9–13 keep the rolling semiquavers clean and light (and avoid poking the thumb-notes). The right-hand melodic line should project, but avoid a heavy-handed approach to the semiquavers. Follow the contour of the line to find the natural shape of each phrase, and use dynamic contrasts to further embellish the character.

Holiday Ragtime

Bernard Geary

Key: C Major

While the tempo of this piece is 'not too fast', the articulation and rhythmic detail bring a busy and bustling effect to the character here. The tempo must be steady throughout, and the left hand (which largely comprises crotchets) will help to maintain that strict pulse all the way. The *staccato* detail in the left hand can be crisp to contrast with the slurs and *legato* phrases in the right hand. The right-hand rhythmic detail is not complex, but the syncopated rhythms must be exact, and avoid rushing the quaver passages. Note that the middle section (bars 17–32) moves into the key of F Major (take note of the change of key signature!). The left-hand chords can become heavy in this section; always listen to the balance between the hands to ensure that the melodic line projects over the accompaniment. The *Da Capo* must be observed in a performance, and the opening section (bars 1–16) must be repeated to complete the piece.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade IV

The Ghost in the Fireplace Op. 81, No. 10

Theodor Kullak

Key: A Minor

Relative Key: C Major


With a $\frac{3}{8}$ time signature, it is important to establish a feel of 2-beats-in-a-bar in this piece; avoid accenting the upbeat at the start. With an *Allegretto* indication, the tempo is not very fast, but the chromatic passages should have fleeting and ghostly effect. These semiquavers must be clean in execution and light in touch, with subtle shaping to give contour to each phrase. Take note of the frequent switches of position for the right hand as it transfers between bass and treble clefs; avoid gaps or delays as the hand moves from one position to another. Note also the articulation markings, as the contrast between *legato* and *staccato* phrases will greatly enhance the character of the piece. Observe the pedal markings indicated at bars 13–32 and 46–51; the pedal will help to establish a more lyrical line in these sections of the piece. Where brackets surround the notes (eg. bars 18, 26 etc.) these notes can be omitted if smaller hands don't yet have the span to reach octaves. Dynamic detail is indicated, as colour and shape are necessary to bring the character to life.

The Butterfly

arr. Agnieszka Bialek

Key: E Minor

Relative Key: G Major

The $\frac{9}{8}$ key signature indicates 'compound triple time', 9 quavers in each bar: () . As you can see, each group of quavers is worth one dotted-crotchet, meaning that there are three dotted-crotchet beats in every bar. This lively dance will need to have a flowing tempo to capture the energy and spirit of the music. It will need slow practise to begin, to ensure that the rhythmic detail is accurately learned, the tempo will build up over time. The touch can be light (like a butterfly!), which will allow the fingers to travel with greater ease. The piece is pedalled throughout, and at times this might cause occasional blurriness, so aim for clean pedal-changes on every beat. Listen to the balance between the two hands, and allow the melodic line to project. The ornaments are optional, so only add these in after the playing is secure and steady, the ornaments are simply decorative notes, and should not impact the overall pace, or distract from the basic melodic detail. Shape the phrases, and add tonal colour to bring this to life.

Repose

Thomas Marek

Key: A Major

Relative Key: F sharp Minor

Stillness and calm are at the core of this piece. With just one chord per bar (for the most part), the harmonic changes are subtle, but effective. This requires legato pedal throughout, and the pedal-changes must be clean, to avoid any cloudiness in the changes of harmony. While the overriding dynamic is piano, the top line of the right-hand chords need to have focus, the contour of this line will help to shape each phrase. Avoid rushing, this needs to be steadily measured throughout. Note the brief change of time signature at bar 47: while there is an additional beat in this bar, the pulse remains the unchanged. This must be played with expression and beauty of sound.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade IV

Sonata in A flat, Hob XVI No. 43, 2nd mvt

Joseph Haydn

Key: A flat Major

Relative Key: F Minor



A flowing, but elegant character is needed to convey the dance style of the *Menuetto*. Avoid accenting the upbeats, the emphasis should fall on first beat of the bar each time. The dotted-rhythm of the upbeat is an important feature throughout the Menuetto, and this rhythm must be exact each time. Articulation detail is important, observe the slurs and *staccato* markings carefully to bring a graceful energy to this piece. By contrast, the Trio section is more lyrical in quality. The tempo does not change, but legato phrasing is essential for the right-hand melody. Follow the contour of each phrase and shape accordingly. By contrast, the left hand (comprising broken chords) must be a gentle support (the repeated thumb-notes can often poke out, so try to avoid this!). Note the *Da Capo* marking: at the end of the Trio section, the student must return to the Menuetto and play it again. Count carefully to ensure accurate timing between the end of the Trio and the start of the Menuetto.

Ticklin' Toes

Florence B. Price

Key: C Major

Relative Key: A Minor

The $\frac{4}{8}$ time signature indicates that there are 4 quaver-beats in every bar: . *Molto allegro* means very lively, so this needs to have energy and drive. The *staccato* quavers of the left hand are light and crisp, so as not to overshadow the right hand. The rhythmic detail of the right hand is fairly repetitive throughout, and it is important to deliver this detail accurately...slow practice and clapping work will help to secure these elements. Pay close attention also to the articulation detail, the position of the accented notes, and the dynamics. For the *D.C. al Coda*: play the piece through to bar 40, then return to the start and repeat bars 1–16, finally, at the end of bar 16 skip to the Coda  (bar 41) and play to the end!

Ave Maria Op. 100 No. 19

Friedrich Burgmüller

Key: A Major

Relative Key: F sharp Minor

The opening section of this piece is written in 4-part harmony (in the style of a chorale), and most of the right-hand melody is chordal. The top note of each chord forms the melody, and it is important for these top notes to sing above the other notes, and connect into melodic phrases. This piece requires legato-pedal throughout, the pedal-changes are indicated. Note that the left hand moves between the treble and bass clefs throughout the piece. From bars 9–12, the left hand has a brief melodic passage, which should be lyrically projected. Then, from bar 17 onward, the left hand has an arpeggiated accompaniment; it is important to keep these quavers gentle and controlled, as they can easily become overpowering. Shaping of phrases is very important throughout. A sense of calm and reverence is central to the character.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade V

Walking in the Rain

Agnieszka Bialek

Key: E flat Major

Relative Key: C Minor

The rhythmic indication at the top of the page is integral to the character of this piece, and the quavers must be played with a 'swinging' effect throughout (the triplets should be played evenly, as written). This piece needs pedal throughout, the sign at bar 3, *simile* (in a similar way) indicates that the pattern of changing pedal on the 1st and 3rd beat of each bar will continue to work well (note that the pedal markings change slightly from bars 16–18). The left-hand accompaniment can be gentle, especially where crotchets break into quavers from bars 9–15, as these can easily become heavy-handed. The melodic line needs to sing, and where chords are featured in the melody, aim to project the top note. Take note of all tied notes in the right hand (eg. bars 2, 3, 8 etc.) as these create a syncopated rhythmic effect. The composer has written in lots of dynamic effects, and these should be carefully observed.

Soldier's March Op. 47, No. 14

Robert Fuchs

Key: D Major

Relative Key: B Minor

Note that both hands begin in the treble clef, and that the left hand switches between the treble and bass clefs throughout this piece. While this is a march, it is playful in character. *Frisch und munter* means 'fresh and lively' and the articulation detail will help to achieve this light-hearted energy. In this case, the *staccato* can be short and sharp, especially where notes are repeated (eg. bar 1, 5 etc.), allowing the fingers to quickly withdraw. Listen closely to the balance between melody and accompaniment, as the melodic line transfers between left and right hands here. Observe the accented notes, as they will give rhythmic definition, and ensure that the dotted-rhythms are played with precision. Dynamic detail and shaping of phrases will enhance the overall effect.

Dedication Op. 1, No. 1

Enrique Granados

Key: F Major

Relative Key: D Minor

A *legato* feel (using both the fingers and the pedal) is a crucial aspect of playing this piece well. It must be lyrical throughout; the right line has the job of balancing the melody (the top line) with the triplet quavers below, which can be a tricky balancing act and will need a lot of separate-hand practise to ensure that the triplets remain a gentle murmur throughout. With fewer notes to play, the left hand has the easier line, but forms the harmonic base throughout the piece. The piece must be pedalled throughout, and the tempo, *Andantino* is not fast, but it must be flowing.

Lorna Horan's Teaching Notes

Grade V

The Estuary

Ailbhe McDonagh (b.1982)

Key: D Major

Relative Key: B Minor

A flowing pace is needed to create a rippling effect with the quaver passages throughout this piece. It requires legato-pedal throughout, the word, *simile* at bar 6, indicates that the same pattern of pedalling should be continued through the remainder of the piece (one pedal-change on the first beat of each bar). Aim to follow the contour of the right hand phrases, to add shape to the melodic line, and try to ensure that the left hand does not overpower the right-hand melody. The rhythmic detail becomes a little tricky at bar 22, where triplet figures are briefly introduced, creating a '3 against 4' pattern. This will take slow practise to begin, to ensure that the notes are evenly distributed between the two hands. It also helps to practise tapping the rhythm with both hands (on the lid of the piano or on a table-top), without playing the notes. This piece must have shape and colour, though the overall effect should be understated and seamless.

Rondo in A Major Wanhal

Johann Baptist

Key: A Major

Relative Key: F sharp Minor

With an *Allegretto* tempo marking, the semiquaver passages are fairly manageable here, though they must be clean, even and light in delivery. As indicated at the start, the left hand requires a *legato* touch in the opening bars, and the first beat of each bar (the minim beat) must be held across the bar. Observe the articulation detail throughout, as the *legato/staccato* detail, slurs and accents will help to bring out the liveliness of character. Always listen carefully to the balance between the melodic line and the accompaniment, to ensure an appropriate balance throughout. Dynamic detail is suggested, and will help to enhance the overall effect. For students with smaller hands, the bracketed notes in bars 57–59 and 63–68 can be omitted.


Gigue, from Suite in D Minor HWV 437

George Frideric Handel

Key: D Minor

Relative Key: F Major

For anyone who is not familiar with the $\frac{12}{8}$ time signature, this is 'Compound Quadruple' time, and there are four dotted-quaver beats in each bar (in this piece, each beat is divided into groups of *three-semiquavers*). This sounds complicated, but if you look at how the right-hand notes are written, you will see that there are four groups of semiquavers in each bar, and each group is worth one beat:

$\frac{12}{8}$  ||. These semiquavers must have a light touch to achieve a flowing pace, and to capture the dance-like character of the Gigue. The left-hand semiquavers can easily become overpowering in this piece, so always listen to the balance between the hands. As mentioned above, the touch should be light, but the phrases must always have shape and direction, and a few *crescendos* and *diminuendos* are written in the score, as guidance. The fingerwork must be clear—remember that Baroque music was written for the harpsichord, which has a much more delicate tone than a piano.
