

HOW TO PLAY

ABILITY RATING LATE BEGINNER

GEORGE W CHADWICK THE CRICKET AND THE BUMBLEBEE

Deft fingerwork and some well-judged hand-crossing will make this whimsical conversation between two insects come to life, says **Melanie Spanswick**

Key C major **Tempo** Allegro moderato **Style** Late-Romantic

Will improve your: ✓Hand-crossing technique ✓Articulation ✓Grace notes



This light-hearted piece was written by American composer George W Chadwick. [There is more to read about Chadwick above the score, p30.] The suggested tempo marking of crotchet equals 104-118 beats per minute will help to procure a sparkling and bright performance with a hint of playfulness.

Let's begin with the LH. The accompanying chords demand a crisp touch, as indicated by the staccato markings. Try to 'block out' chords in each bar in bars 1-16 and 30-45. For example, play one triad for bar 1 (C, E, and G), then follow suit for all subsequent bars. This will give you an overview of the chordal structure and help assimilate note patterns and fingerings.

Now to focus on the LH articulation. The bottom note of every chord (on the first beat of the bar) must be held for the entire bar, acting as a pedal note – for example, middle C in bar 1. Try to hold the minim whilst accenting the first quaver beat of each bar with a deeper touch, followed by a short, sharp staccato touch for the remaining three quavers. Ensure the chords are well balanced by depressing notes at precisely the same moment.

Good articulation will be paramount in the RH as well. Play through the RH part with a metronome; set a very slow

pulse, preferably using a quaver or semiquaver setting, and be sure to place every note to the 'tick'. It's easy to rush through the RH semiquaver note-patterns (e.g. bars 2 and 10). To avoid rushing, firmly 'place' the black key (e.g. the F# in bar 2) with the tip of the finger, with the aim of sounding the note for its full value. This is vital in bars 25 to 28, too.

The ornaments demand a clear, decisive touch. Acciaccaturas, such as those at bar 1 and bar 5, should be played *before* the main beat. Try to ensure the second finger (on the F# in bar 1) uses the finger pad, sounding the note quite heavily. The following main note (crotchet G), played by the third finger, should use an even deeper touch – with the fingertip. This is particularly important for those notes marked with accents (see bar 5). The melody notes with staccato markings must also be very detached.

When practising hands together, work at a slow speed. This will be crucial for bars 5-8, and all similar, where the RH jumps over the LH. A useful method for practising hand-crossing, or any larger jump, can be to extend that jump. For example, in bar 5, keep the LH chords in place, and take the RH down an octave further than written, moving to the F# and G at the bottom of the bass stave. Practise this big movement rapidly and in isolation. Once you are

used to this, return to the jump as written – it should feel much easier to play under your fingers.

LEARNING TIP

For fun, try to imagine a possible conversation between the Cricket (RH, bars 1-4), and the Bumblebee (RH, bars 5-8)!

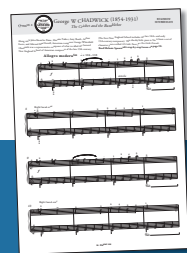
As to the overall structure, the piece is in Ternary form (ABA) and consists of four-bar phrases.

The middle section (bars 17-29) will require slow, intense, hands-together practice in order to perfect coordination at such unison spots as bars 23 and 24. It can help to 'lead' with the LH in these unison passages; that is, play more heavily into the key bed with the LH fingers, so that the RH part can 'follow'. This will help you to develop even and crisply articulated semiquavers.

The sustaining pedal might be effective at the ends of phrases.

Take a look at my suggested pedalling on the score. Observe the octave higher marking (*8va*) from bar 48 to 50, and be sure to jump down an octave for the C at bar 51. The LH is also marked an octave lower at bars 52 and 53; keep the grace notes lighter than the crotchet Cs – those crotchets demand full power! ■

More information about Melanie Spanswick can be found at www.melaniespanswick.com



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