

HOW TO PLAY

ABILITY RATING LATE BEGINNER

HUMMEL ROMANCE FROM SIX EASY PIECES OP 52

Some smooth left hand playing coupled with a sonorous right hand melody line will bring this delightful Romance to life, says **Melanie Spanswick**

Key G major **Tempo** Crotchet = 63 **Style** Early Romantic
Will improve your ✓ *Cantabile* playing ✓ Ornaments ✓ LH agility



This charming and expressive study features a beautiful RH melody. It is combined with a rolling chordal LH accompaniment – a texture synonymous with piano music of this period. Constructed of eight-bar phrases, a crotchet equals 63 beats per minute is a steady tempo for this Romance, but it's also one which will allow the tranquil character to gradually evolve.

Let's begin with the LH part.

The accompaniment comprises calm triplet quavers made up of three-note chords; the easiest way to learn the hand positions and suggested fingering is to 'block out' every crotchet beat. That is, try to play the notes of each crotchet beat *together*. For example, in bar 1, play the G, B and D together, then move to playing the F#, C and D together in bar 2. Go through the entire piece slowly using this practice tool.

The LH part tends to leap around.

So when practising as 'blocking out' chords, pay attention to the movement needed between them. Take the end of bar 7 to the first beat of bar 8 as an example: As you can see, the notes of the last beat of bar 7 are A C# and G, followed by a D, F#, A, D in bar 8. In order to arrive at the second chord cleanly, and on time, it can help to practise the lowest notes of each chord alone – that means the A followed by the D, which are both played by the

fifth finger. Work at this leap by extending the jump by an octave; move to the D an octave *lower* than written while keeping the A as is. Now extend the jump in this manner while playing the *whole* chord. When returning to the written pitch, the movement will feel easier and more comfortable.

Pay special attention to the LH's fourth and fifth fingers. As a general rule, they play the bottom note of each three-note chordal pattern. These notes require a deeper touch – not only because they are the first-beat bass note in the chord, but because they are also often written as crotchets (e.g. bars 1-7). Thus they need to be held for the full duration of the beat, acting as a pedal note.

Still focusing on the LH, aim to practise two to three bars at a time. As mentioned above, give the first note of every beat a firmer touch – using your fingertip, holding it in place – while the second and third notes of the triplets are played with a softer and lighter touch. It will help if you keep your wrist relaxed when practising in this manner. The overall result should be a smooth, even and steady LH line.

The RH melody must always project. When playing long melody notes, such as those in bar 1, aim for the fingertips to press into the key bed, using the weight of the arm via a slight circular wrist

motion. This will help 'cushion' the sound and provide a richer sonority which will carry through until the next note is played. Shorter notes, like the semiquaver F# in bar 2, need a much lighter touch.

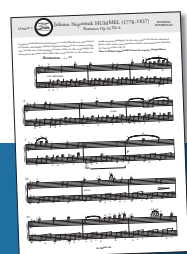
LEARNING TIP

Dabs of sustaining pedal provide an attractive resonance at the ends of phrases.

Ornaments are sprinkled throughout. They should sound smooth within the melodic line, so I suggest taking them out of context and practising them on their own, extremely slowly. Check your fingerings before you start to practise each one. The ornaments are mostly written out, with the exception of the turn in bar 27. For this, try the following note pattern, using the suggested fingering: Start with the G (as written) followed by A, G, F#, G, then moving to the semiquaver A at the end of the beat.

In the slow, practising stages, play each note of an ornament with a deep touch. Play to the bottom of the key, with a full tone – then, when you add speed, lighten the touch and imagine 'skimming over' the notes. The acciaccaturas will be effective if played slightly before the main note, as opposed to sounding 'crushed' on the beat.

More about Melanie Spanswick at www.melaniespanswick.com.



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