

# HOW TO PLAY

ABILITY RATING LATE BEGINNER

## CUTHBERT HARRIS REGENT'S PARK (ON THE LAKE) NO 6 FROM LONDON SCENES

If you fine-tune your legato and grade your dynamics with care, this unassuming little boat will glide along the water just perfectly, says **Melanie Spanswick**

**Key** G major **Tempo** Andante **Style** Late Romantic

**Will improve your** ✓Legato playing ✓Pedalling ✓Left-hand leaps

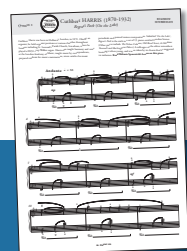


This endearing miniature was written by the little-known British Romantic composer Cuthbert Harris. It moves along calmly at a dotted crotchet equals 56 beats per minute. Comprising four-bar phrases, a successful performance rests on a supportive and gentle LH accompaniment combined with an expressive, *cantabile* RH melodic line.

By using the pedal with the LH on its own, you will be able to hear the sound and the resonance more clearly

**Let's start with the LH.** The barcarolle-like rhythmic pattern remains constant throughout, with harmonies changing every bar. Bar 1, for example, comprises the G major tonic chord – G, B and D. I suggest reading through the piece and determining the harmonic progressions by playing every bar as a chord: play the first-beat bass crotchet separately, but then play the quaver and crotchet chord (sometimes dotted crotchet) *together*. This will help you become familiar with the note patterns and hand-position changes.

**Now for the LH fingering.** In bar 1, you can use the standard fingering of 5-2-1 for the quaver and two-note crotchet chord. Or,



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as an alternative, try 3-1-2. (I have written this alternative fingering onto the score.) This second option requires plenty of lateral arm movement and a flexible wrist so that the hand and arm are able to swing from the left to right – the hand guiding the fingers into place so as not to cause strain. The third finger basically acts as a pivot. This fingering should also help achieve a smooth LH.

Whatever fingerings you decide, the LH fifth finger will still need to be agile. Using bar 3 as an example, place the tip of the fifth finger firmly on the first bass note of the bar with a fairly full tone, keeping it depressed for its full value. Then quickly leap to the D an octave higher (also to be played with the fifth finger); try to play this second note with a softer tonal colour, before going on to play the second crotchet beat (the two-note chord) with a little more sonority to that of the preceding quaver. Matching the sound in this way will give the illusion of legato.

Once the LH is secure and up to speed, introduce the sustain (right) pedal. Follow the suggested markings. By using the pedal with the LH on its own, you will be able to hear the sound and the resonance more clearly.

The RH melody will need some beautiful phrasing. Always aim for a smooth, melodic line. Try to 'place' the first melody note

(top G, bar 1) with a fairly deep touch; a good arm weight will help achieve the required *cantabile*. As a rule, the upper note of each two-note chord must be highlighted, as it's vital to the melodic line. To do this effectively, move the wrist and hand a little to the right, ensuring your arm weight is supporting the fifth finger, and aim to keep the lower note of each two-note chord soft.

### LEARNING TIP

To ensure an elegant and flowing performance, try to keep a steady pulse throughout – with just a brief *rallentando* during the final two bars.

Some of the wide intervals within the melody line create intensity and drama. The D to the B in the second beat of bar 2, for example, provides a yearning effect before arriving at the A at the beginning of bar 3. In order to highlight this effect, play the D with a *cantabile* touch, before moving to the B, 'placing' it carefully with a slightly deeper sound. The following A can be played with a firmer tenuto touch: lean into it, ensuring that the sound carries for the value of the note. Similar intervals at bars 3/4, 6/7, 9/10, 13/14, 18/19, 21/22 and 22/23 will all benefit from this approach. ■

More information about Melanie Spanswick can be found at [www.melaniespanswick.com](http://www.melaniespanswick.com)