

HOW TO PLAY

ABILITY RATING LATE ELEMENTARY

IGNATIUS SANCHO 'BUSHY PARK' FROM 12 COUNTRY DANCES

A good sense of rhythm is of the essence, says **Melanie Spanswick**, in this catchy and energetic dance by the little-known composer

Key F major **Tempo** Allegro **Style** Classical

Will improve your ✓ Articulation ✓ Rhythmic precision ✓ Dynamic range



Charles Ignatius Sancho (c.1729-1780) was a British campaigner, writer and composer. Thought to have been born on a slave ship in the Atlantic Ocean, he spent his first two years as an enslaved boy on the island of Grenada. As a two-year-old, Sancho was brought to England and was a servant to three sisters in Greenwich. Patronage from the Duke of Montagu eventually enabled him to enjoy a literary education and by the end of his life, he was a prominent figure in artistic and aristocratic circles.

Sancho wrote the 12 Country Dances in 1779 shortly before his death. They were intended to be performed in line-dance formation. *Bushy Park* is No 4 from the set, with all the performance directions on this score being editorial. Set in four-bar phrases, a lively suggested 'Allegro' marking and tempo of a dotted crotchet equals 88 beats per minute feels appropriate to capture the buoyant character.

Fingering plays an important role. I have added a fair amount of fingering as the RH, which contains all the melodic material, moves swiftly around the keyboard requiring nimble dexterity. The fingering in bar 1 may feel slightly awkward at first, but using the second finger on the first-beat quaver A followed by the fourth finger on the second-beat quaver C encourages easy movement towards the B \flat on the first beat of bar 2. Similarly, the second finger

placement on the final beat of bar 2 (a B \flat) also provides easy positioning of the hand for the following first-inversion triads in bar 3.

Start with separate hand practice.

Don't be tempted to ignore the LH part as it provides a solid foundation for the RH melody. It would be effective with a firm touch and be sure to observe quaver rests at the beginning of phrases.

A strong rhythmic pulse is essential.

Once the notes are secure, befriend your metronome! Set a slow pulse using quaver beats. Perhaps start with a quaver equals 100-120 beats per minute and only increase the tempo when you can play from the beginning to the end without errors or hesitations. Place each note with the metronome tick for accuracy, avoiding rushing or lingering. When adding speed, keep fingertips close to the keys and wrists loose and relaxed, so that the hand is easily able to 'guide' the fingers to their rightful place.

Clean articulation will take your performance to the next level.

Even if not marked, ensure that the semiquavers in the RH are played legato and are carefully articulated so that they are crisp and neat – think sparkling! Play all the semiquaver upbeats – at bars 1, 5, 9 and 13 – lightly and evenly.

The groups of three RH quavers in bar 1 can be articulated as such: with a slur between the A

and the F, using a swift 'drop-roll' motion when joining the two notes. And then the third quaver (the repeated F) to be played staccato. This articulation can be used with the LH quaver groups, as well. The addition of a quick 'drop-roll' motion (as described in detail in several of my previous articles) gives the necessary dance-like swing. Generally, with the exception of the semiquavers, notes without the suggested slurs (or phrase markings) should be played non legato, proffering a bouncy, energetic feel.

LEARNING TIP

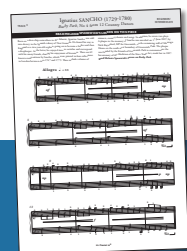
Although written in the Classical period, this piece feels similar to a Baroque gigue, requiring very little pedal and a lightness of touch.

Consider your dynamics carefully.

Those that are marked on the score are merely suggestions, and you may choose to play something completely different. I would pay attention to the top RH B \flat s in bars 7 and 14, as they would benefit from greater colour and nuance.

Keep in mind the repeats. Music is often repeated several times in dances, and each time must contain tonal variants. It might be a good idea to write in two different dynamic possibilities so that you know how you are going to vary the sound as you practise. ■

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