

# HOW TO PLAY

## ARNOLDO SARTORIO WHO IS THERE? FROM OP 783 NO 9

A firm pulse is of the utmost importance in this thinly-textured miniature – so have your metronome on standby, says **Melanie Spanswick**



Arnoldo Sartorio (1853-1936) was a German composer, choral conductor and piano teacher. Of Italian heritage but born in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, he wrote over 1,000 opus numbers. Today he is mainly remembered for the educational piano pieces he wrote for his piano students. Sartorio's music is attractive and well-written for the instrument. He often wrote under various pseudonyms, for reasons unknown.

### Who is there? is the perfect Grade 1 piece.

Tuneful and lively, there is a definite 'question and answer' character within each phrase. Both musical lines are written in the treble clef and the music lies comfortably under the hands with little movement around the keyboard. The tempo marking of a crotchet equals 116 beats per minute (bpm) might be too fast for some players – so I suggest to start a little slower with, for example, crotchet equals 90 bpm.

### Written in four-bar phrases, the opening thematic material is centred around the G major chord.

Begin by familiarising yourself with the scale and arpeggio of G major followed by the tonic triad. You'll notice that the opening two bars of the piece, plus the upbeat at the beginning, only include notes from the G major chord: G, B, D. It might be helpful to mark this triadic tune every time it occurs – for example, as at bars 1-2, 5-6, 17-18, 21 and 24.

The piece contains a thin texture, sometimes requiring only one hand or 'line' at a time. Fewer notes can often lead to an unstable pulse with a tendency to rush; therefore, tap the rhythm on a table top or your piano lid before you start learning the notes. This will be especially important in bars 3, 7 and 19, where semiquavers are included. Set a steady pulse on your metronome: subdivide the beat into quavers, or even semiquavers, and start slowly with a quaver equals 150 bpm. Gradually increase the speed when confident. Once you have a feeling for the rhythmic patterns and can keep the pulse stable from the beginning to the end of the piece whilst tapping, it's time to learn the notes.

### ABILITY RATING

Elementary

### KEY

G major

### TEMPO

Allegretto

### STYLE

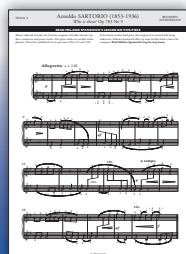
Late Romantic

### WILL IMPROVE

- ✓ Articulation
- ✓ Repeated-note finger changes
- ✓ Rhythmic playing

### LEARNING TIP

Staccato articulation should be crisp and incisive in stark contrast to the smooth legato phrasing



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### Finger changes on repeated notes are a feature.

The repeated notes within the melody can be more effectively articulated by changing fingers on the same note. See bar 3, for example: At the start, the RH plays the first B with the thumb, then the second finger takes over to play the next B, before continuing on to play the second beat B, also with the second finger. All three Bs could be played by the thumb, but changing fingers results in greater clarity. Similarly, in the LH in bar 3, you will see the fingering of 1, 2, 3 on the same note (G). This fingering can be demanding for some, though, particularly as the subsequent note at the start of bar 4 requires the thumb. In which case, I would suggest using the second finger to play all three notes (see my fingering in brackets).

### Various articulations have been precisely written into the score.

Short phrases involving pairs of notes need careful attention. For example, the opening two slurred LH quavers (D to a G) would benefit from the 'drop-roll' or 'drop-lift' approach: that is, the relaxed lowering of the wrist helps the finger sink into the first note, whilst its subsequent upward movement – lifting or rolling the next note/finger up and away from the key after playing the second note – results in an elegantly phrased, smooth pairing of two notes. Use this technique throughout the piece wherever this phrasing occurs.

### Staccato appears regularly at the ends of phrases.

It is an important feature on the second or final note of short phrases – for example in both hands on the second beat in bar 4, in the LH on the second beat of bar 8, in the LH on the first beat of 15, and in the LH on the first beat of bar 1 and in similar places.

Note the diminuendo at bar 15 and the ritenuto at bar 16. They herald a slight pause or 'pull up' before the theme returns at bar 17 (which is made clear by the *a tempo* marking). At bars 23 and 24, though, an even slower 'pull up' is required, so that you can make a majestic *forte* finish. ■

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