

HOW TO PLAY

ABILITY RATING LATE BEGINNER

GRANADOS DEDICATION – NO 1 FROM STORIES OF THE YOUNG OP 1

Granados sets the scene for his ten-piece suite with a seemingly simple melody. Pay special attention, though, to the three-part layering, advises **Melanie Spanswick**

Key F major **Tempo** Andantino **Style** Late Romantic
Will improve your ✓ Finger substitution ✓ Voicing ✓ Legato



Dedication is an elegant, lyrical and expressive work. Consisting of a predominantly three-part texture, a smooth legato touch will allow the charming melody to unfold effectively. The RH contains two parts: The top part is the melody which floats above the texture, and this is combined with a triplet quaver accompaniment figure as the lower part. The fairly sparse LH bass line provides the solid harmonic foundation. Structured in four-bar phrases, try a calm tempo of a crotchet = 60.

Separate hand practice is always a good way to begin learning. Whilst seemingly straightforward, the LH does occasionally feature two parts, requiring the sustaining of certain notes. Look at bars 9-12, for example: You can see that on the first beat, the upper part consists of a minim B \flat and the lower part two crotchets (B \flat and C). Place each first beat of the bar firmly, holding the minim B \flat in place for the entire bar, moving the thumb onto the A of the first beat of bar 10 as smoothly as possible. Try to match the sound of the new note – that is, the minim A at bar 10 to that of the dying minim B \flat in the previous bar.

Practise each musical line on its own. The two parts of the RH can be separated and practised alone. However, it's important to remember to always use the fingering which will be employed when playing both lines together.

This will help assimilate note patterns and fingering.

'Blocking-out' is another useful practice tool. That is, playing the notes within each crotchet beat at the same moment – thus creating a chord. For example, on the first beat of the piece, play the F-A-C of the RH and the bottom F of the LH all together. Once each chord is secure, practise moving from one crotchet beat to the next, as chords, eventually playing through the piece in this manner. By doing so, you are efficiently learning the harmonic progressions as well as the shape of note patterns.

Finger substitution will encourage an even better legato touch. The RH melody commands a seamless legato. It is possible to create this using the sustaining pedal, but for a compelling and totally even legato, free from any bumpiness, changing fingers on the same note (as has been marked throughout the score) is preferable. Let's look at bar 5 as an example: The E is to be played by the fourth finger if the suggested fingering is used. Then quickly (and silently) 'swap' to the fifth finger while the note is held in place. Ensure the fifth finger speedily swivels into position after the fourth finger has played the note, so that it can take over holding down the key, allowing the note to continue sounding until the fourth finger plays the subsequent D on the second beat of the bar.

LEARNING TIP

Rubato plays a vital role at the ends of phrases, allowing the music to breathe.

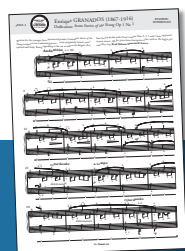
Good voicing of the melody line will help convey the mood.

Cantabile can be achieved in the melody by weighting the fingers on the right-hand side of the RH. Much of the melodic line is played by the fourth and fifth fingers, which are usually less firm than the thumb, second or third. In bar 1, as the F and G are played, allow the weight of the arm to move behind the right side of the hand and wrist, supporting those fingers. Flexible, lateral wrist motion will be important here, too. Keeping the wrist loose and relaxed, aim to use arm weight the moment the key is depressed. This encourages the fingers to achieve a deeper sonority.

A note about chromatic colouring and tempo.

Chromatic notes can be highlighted by leaning into them as one might if they featured a tenuto marking – notes such as the E \flat and F \sharp in bar 6 and the E \flat and E \natural in bar 16. For accurate rhythm in bar 12, play the RH semiquaver after the lower-part last quaver (A). For a real romantic reading, observe the tempo changes, such as the ritardando at bar 15 and at the end. A little rubato at the ends of phrases will also create extra poignancy. ■

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