

# HOW TO PLAY

ABILITY RATING LATE BEGINNER

## SMETANA PIECE IN G, NO 2 FROM TREASURY OF MELODIES

Lots to absorb within this short 32-bar waltz, says **Melanie Spanswick**, who offers advice on how to get the Czech-style accents spot-on and to allow time for rubato

**Key** G major **Tempo** Allegretto **Style** Romantic  
**Will improve your** ✓ *Cantabile* ✓ Melodic shaping ✓ Rubato



This charming little waltz was written by the Czech composer **Bedřich Smetana (1824-84)**. It comes from two volumes entitled *Poklad Melodií (Treasury of Melodies)*. I like to call it a Waltz in G, as it reflects the character, and will hopefully encourage development of the waltz 'lilt'. The tempo marking of a dotted minim equals 60 beats per minute allows the music to flow nicely without feeling rushed.

**Separate hand practice will help secure the LH's accompaniment part.** I suggest practising in chordal patterns: for example, in bars 1-3, play blocked-out chords – that is, playing all notes in the bar together, which will ensure swift assimilation of notes and fingerings. When playing as written, aim for a deeper touch on the first note of every bar, keeping subsequent beats lighter. For added support, move the wrist and hand a fraction to the left whilst playing the first note of the bar. When playing the second and third beats, make sure that the notes of the two-note chords are played at exactly the same moment by keeping fingers close to the keys, depressing them lightly for a softer colour and dance-like style.

**Arm weight in the RH will help project the melodic line.** When practising the RH's melody, use the wrist as a 'hinge', allowing it to move freely, so that weight from the arm can be fully utilised. Allow

each finger to delve deeply to the bottom of the key, or key-bed, using a firm touch, and try to 'cushion' the sound at the moment of impact with a rotational wrist motion. When this technique is used in conjunction with weight from the arm, the result is a richer, more sonorous, tone. The LH accompaniment should be significantly quieter so that the tune can soar.

the RH at bars 8, 16, 24, 32-33 and in the LH at bar 20 need rubato – which means 'robbed' time or taking time for expressive effect. At the end of bar 8, the C can be held a fraction longer with the following C# held even longer still, before returning to a regular pulse at the start of bar 9. These moments of rubato allow for breathing space before a new phrase as well as enhancing the Romantic style. Note: the RH staccatos on the last line of music should be played with a non-legato approach to the notes rather than a detached, sharp touch, which would disturb the smooth line.

### Moments of rubato allow for a breathing space before the start of a new phrase

**The RH melody requires careful shaping.** The top of each phrase must be given shape and direction as well as a smooth legato touch. On the third beat of bars 2, 10, 26, and 30, the melody moves to its highest point (e.g. the G in bar 2). Adding a small crescendo at the beginning of the bar moving up to a 'leaning' into the key on that third beat will benefit the shaping of the melody, offering the waltz 'swing', before landing with a fairly strong touch on the D in the following bar. This way of emphasising certain notes within a phrase also occurs on the third-beat C in bar 4, the third-beat C# in bar 14, as well as on the first-beat B in bar 19 and the first-beat C# in bar 23.

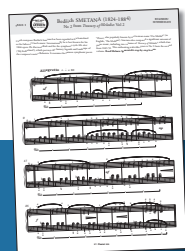
**Rubato will help shape the melody.** Passages such as those in

### LEARNING TIP

The sustaining pedal provides a wonderful resonance throughout and must be used freely – aim for one lift per bar.

**The LH fingering might seem unnatural between bars 13-14.** But it does work! On the third beat of bar 13 aim to keep the fourth finger depressed on the D whilst quickly swivelling the hand over, landing on the E and C# with the thumb and third finger on the first beat of bar 14. This movement should eventually feel comfortable and allows for a smoother motion and a legato effect. This 'swivel' movement will also be useful in the RH in the penultimate bar (32). ■

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