

LEVEL 7

LEVEL 7 REPERTOIRE

For Level 7 examinations, students continue to present three repertoire selections and two etudes:

- **List A:** Baroque Repertoire
- **List B:** Classical and Classical-style Repertoire
- **List C:** Romantic, 20th-, and 21st-century Repertoire
- **Etudes:** two technically contrasting etudes

Select any piece to learn more about it.

List A: Baroque Repertoire

Invention No. 8 in F Major, BWV 779 by Johann Sebastian Bach

This invention by J.S. Bach provides an opportunity for students to play with a variety of articulations, promoting independence of the hands in a contrapuntal texture. Students may find it a rich exercise to analyze this characteristic example of Baroque style for its harmonic complexity and structural devices. Students can be encouraged to add musical contouring to highlight sequential and imitative writing, bringing out the dialogue between the hands and promoting sensitivity to different keys and registers. Ideas for musical shaping can also be inspired by the changing and developing harmonic intensity, such as major and minor episodes. Performances that feature a clear finger touch and articulation will enhance the rhythmic steadiness and drive inherent in the piece.

Rondeau by Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre

Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre was one of the few well-known woman composers of her time. This rondeau, from her *Pièces de clavecin qui peuvent se jouer sur le violon*, written in 1707, is a fascinating introduction to the mode of ornamentation of the French Baroque. This provides an excellent opportunity to introduce students to read the *pincé* (mordant) and double (turn) and then to play them with originality and variety. When students become comfortable with the abundance of written ornaments, they can begin to alter the speed of some ornaments, adding variety to the reiterations of the refrain. The final step would be experimenting with adding or lengthening the ornaments that are written in a progressively more complex way with each repeat. Students will also enjoy the parallels to jazz style in using *inégalité* here, much like swinging the eighth notes. This musical style recalls the meaning of the word “baroque”: an irregularly shaped pearl with all its asymmetry, beauty, and variety.

Allegro in E Minor by José António Carlos de Seixas

José António Carlos de Seixas was a pre-eminent Portuguese composer and virtuoso in the 18th century. His Allegro in E Minor is an exciting opportunity to stimulate a virtuosic approach while improving students' rhythmic playing and steadiness, and their clarity in right-hand finger work. While navigating the brilliant sixteenth-note writing in the right hand, complete with tremolos, violin-like figurations, and triplets, students should also strive to cultivate a sensitivity to harmonic rhythm and build intensity based on the harmonic progressions. Students can be encouraged to listen for evenness and clarity in the sixteenth-note passagework, while also isolating the melodic notes within the texture. A reminder to add melodic contouring following the general direction of the right-hand passages can also be helpful.

Bourrée in F Major by Georg Philipp Telemann

This bourrée by Georg Philip Telemann is an apt characterization of this lively Baroque dance movement. Compositional devices include sequential writing, dialogue between the hands, and a variety of detached articulations in this two-part dance texture. Following a greater understanding and analysis of the structural and compositional devices, students might enjoy adding terraced dynamics and echo effects into their interpretation. In playing this piece, students benefit from a greater understanding and appreciation of the variety of articulation inherent in the Baroque style. Consider playing the eighth notes in a more connected way and the longer note values (quarter and half notes) more detached. Technical challenges include seamlessly executing the interchangeable rhythmic motives between the hands in a steady tempo.

La joyeuse by Jean-Philippe Rameau

The works of Jean-Philippe Rameau, the most important French opera composer of his generation, embody a theatrical and extraverted spirit. *La joyeuse* (the joyful one) is from a set of pieces entitled *Pièces de clavessin avec une méthode pour la mécanique des doigts*. True to its title, this piece provides an opportunity to play in a boisterous and bold *affect* while developing steady coordination between the hands playing descending scales in thirds. The hands often play very close to each other, making the coordination very important here. In the couplets, consider embellishing the simple quarter-note melodies with added ornaments. Students can refine their interpretation of the piece by striving to add melodic shaping based on the sequential writing and the direction of motives. Consider also playing with a change of dynamic color between the main rondeau and the intervening episodes.

Allemande in E flat Major by Johann Sebastian Bach

The Allemande from J.S. Bach's French Suite No. 4 in E flat major, BWV 815, is a charming example of this popular Baroque dance. Forming the first of the core movements of the solo suite in the Baroque era, an allemande was typically a dance of moderate tempo, featuring idiomatic instrumental writing. In the arpeggiated figures of this piece, listen to the voice leading between the hands (right hand first sixteenth-notes and middle voices in mm. 3–5) as well as to the prominent bass notes within the musical texture, and cultivate the opportunity for listening between extremes of registers. This Allemande begins in a simpler, *style brisé*,

with mostly two-part texture, but evolves into a more complex three-part contrapuntal texture. Students may use this textural complexity as an opportunity to create a different dynamic color between the soprano and alto voices in the right hand (mm. 6–10).

Sonata in A Major, K 208 by Domenico Scarlatti

This *cantabile* sonata by Domenico Scarlatti is one of the most striking examples of lyricism within his oeuvre of over 550 keyboard sonatas. Students will enjoy being able to emulate the voice of an expressive singer in this aria-like piece. It is important to maintain a flowing tempo here, and to take advantage of opportunities to introduce articulation and shaping that reflects melodic inflection, following the direction of the melodies and leaning on expressive accidentals, ornaments, and syncopations. Students will deepen their sensitivity to harmonic expressiveness by listening to the left-hand dissonances, further appreciating the expressivity and poignancy of this piece. Pianistic challenges include cultivating finger control and shaping without using too much pedal, as well as playing with lyricism while maintaining a very regular pulse in the left hand.

Gigue in G Minor by George Frideric Handel

This Gigue by George Frideric Handel, from his *Suites de pièces pour le clavecin*, is emblematic of the energetic style of this dance, including a rollicking, skipping rhythm written in compound meter and played at a brisk tempo. Encourage students to practice and perform with a predominantly rhythmic approach that maintains the integrity and energy of the gigue pulse. Along with an incisive rhythm, students should perform with an articulated, precise touch that brings clarity and evenness to the eighth notes. To add textural variety and promote independence of the hands, strive to introduce some contrasting articulation to the eighth notes in the other contrapuntal lines. Students should listen so that the ornaments do not interrupt the brisk tempo and may choose to add them depending on their overall facility with the piece and confidence in playing completely in rhythm.

List B: Classical and Classical-style Repertoire

Sonata in G Minor, op. 2, no. 1: First Movement by Anna Bon

This sonata movement by Anna Bon, an 18th-century woman musician and composer, is a fine example of early Classical texture and harmonic language. There are some recognizable Baroque compositional elements, such as a predominantly two-part texture and sequential writing, but the harmonic language is more closely associated with the galant style. Discuss the overarching phrasing in this piece with students to ensure that the ends of phrases are played quieter (in places where later Classical composers might have notated a two-note slur). A helpful exercise may be to mark the phrases together with the student to facilitate musical analysis and listening to this fundamental musical element. Students have the opportunity to execute light, articulated trills and double notes here as well as to practice cleanliness and accuracy in broken chord figurations.

Sonata in C Major, Hob. XVI:1: First Movement by Franz Joseph Haydn

The playful character of the first movement of Joseph Haydn's Sonata in C Major, Hob. XVI:1, is inextricably linked to its abundance of written-in embellishments. The very first note begins with an ornament, inviting a conversation between teacher and student about the role of ornamentation in the musical texture here to impart lightness and humor. Encourage students to execute ornaments clearly but lightly, playing them as one musical and technical gesture rather than as separate notes. Teachers can also highlight where the ornaments embellish moments of harmonic tension and resolution, inviting dynamic nuance in their execution. While emphasizing the importance of maintaining dynamic interest and variety despite the repetitive, motoric left-hand Alberti bass, consider possible echo effects here and consider experimenting with additional ornamentation. A characteristic example of Classical style, this piece promotes the development of a range of articulations, including the light "wedge" articulation as well as longer detached notes.

***Für Elise*, WoO 59 by Ludwig van Beethoven**

Students often excitedly choose to play a work as familiar to them as *Für Elise*. The study of this long-time student favorite brings the opportunity to develop lyrical playing and sophisticated pedaling. Teachers can cultivate harmonic awareness and talk about how it contributes to the phrasing, adding dissonance and resolution. The opening melody should be played with melodic direction in the right hand; strive to delineate the overarching phrases. Throughout the piece, students can practice the seamlessness of their syncopated pedaling, listening for accuracy in pedal changes and clear damping with the pedal. In the contrasting B section, encourage elasticity in the opening singing phrase. In the drama and pathos of the C section, students can continue their syncopated pedaling for the pedal points to resonate ominously against the changing right hand chordal dissonances. Students can also practice smooth playing and melodic direction in arpeggio technique in the *coda*. In navigating the emotional range and variety of keyboard writing in the different sections of the piece, encourage students to maintain the same tempo throughout to create an overall unified and flowing performance.

Sonata in C Minor, op. 17, no. 2: Third Movement by Johann Christian Bach

This *prestissimo* sonata movement by Johann Christian Bach features a relentless, driving rhythmic motion, requiring facility and virtuosity in performance. The movement begins with energy and is written with continuous triplet rhythms throughout, exchanging between the left and right hands. Students can practice maintaining an evenness and continuity in the triplet rhythm and cultivate harmonic awareness in the opening: Where is the chord with more intensity? Students may benefit from finding the differences between predominantly melodic moments and harmonic moments. In the melodic moments, strive to delineate the overarching phrases and add melodic contouring based on the direction of notes. Focusing on the harmonic moments in mm. 8–9, practice the broken right-hand chords blocked with the left hand to hear the building intensity of the harmonic progression. It is also possible to use the pedal to project the unfolding harmonic progression from m. 27 onward. Students can relish the opportunity to play cleanly and virtuosically in the extended *cadenza*-like passages of this exciting and motoric piece.

Scherzo in A Major by Johann Nepomuk Hummel

In this vivacious Scherzo in A Major by Johann Nepomuk Hummel, students can cultivate a clear and light touch throughout to reflect the sparkling, playful writing. The opening rhythmic figure should be precise and clearly articulated to create an incisive, energetic beginning. Students have the opportunity to practice lightness and evenness in their sixteenth-note passagework; encourage the sixteenth-note extended passages to be played with melodic shape and line, following the ascending and descending notes, to avoid static playing. Teachers can encourage listening to the harmonic character of the dissonant *sforzando* chords and their subsequent resolutions. In the mirrored melodies between the right and left hands, cultivate evenness with the left hand playing with the same clear articulation as the right hand. In the countermelody in the top line of m. 53, play with smooth shape even if (because of smaller hands) all notes cannot be held. Cultivate a sensitivity to register, as the students play the falling motive in the ending starting up high, through the middle register, and becoming softer and softer.

Sonata in D Major, op. 4, no. 1: First Movement by Muzio Clementi

This first movement from the Sonata in D major, op. 4, no. 1, by Muzio Clementi is an opportunity to deepen students' knowledge about Classical texture and the corresponding skills of voicing between the hands and projecting contrasting characters. Teachers may begin by discussing the cut time signature and feeling, choosing a tempo that reflects the duple pulse. Cultivate lyricism in the right hand, avoiding any choppiness, and encourage the students to listen to the voicing between their two hands, maintaining clarity of Classical texture. This movement features an abundance of rhythms; encourage students to practice the steadiness of their rhythmic subdivisions, keeping an even pulse between the changing half notes, quarter notes, eighth notes, and triplets. The use of the pedal should be sparing, appropriate for a Classical texture; however, a short rhythmic pedal could be introduced in the loud chordal moments to achieve an orchestral-like resonance.

Sonatina in A Minor, op. 88, no. 3: First Movement by Friedrich Kuhlau

In this charming sonatina movement by Friedrich Kuhlau, students have the opportunity to work on their lyrical playing as well as their lightness and brilliance in passagework: two frequently occurring, contrasting characters within the Classical style. In the opening melody, cultivate lyricism and shape in the right hand and play the trill ornament with smoothness and direction. Also, listen and practice sensitivity to harmonic tension and resolution within the opening phrase. In the brighter C major section with passagework, students should play with brilliance, lightness, evenness, and clarity in rhythmic playing. From measure 24, students may benefit from analyzing the modulations and the transposition of melodies, emerging with a greater understanding of the harmonic color and intensity in this development section. Throughout the melodic moments of the piece, students can develop an intervallic sensitivity, shaping the expressive smaller intervals as well as the larger melodic stretches.

List C: Romantic, 20th-, and 21st-century Repertoire

Rondo–Toccata, op. 60, no. 4 by Dmitri Kabalevsky

The Rondo–Toccata, written by the 20th-century Russian composer Dmitri Kabalevsky, features an angular, mechanical rhythmic character and demands a consistency and brilliance of tone and articulation. Encourage students to develop a consistently sharp *staccato* sound in both hands and invite them to listen to their voicing in the *forte* parallel *staccato* melodies from measure 49 onward so the left hand does not overpower the right hand. In the contrasting *marcato* section, featuring parallel melodies in the right and left hands, students may vary their articulation by playing with a longer detached, *portamento* touch with the middle voice softer: a muffled timpani sound rhythmically accompanying the strong brass instrument-like melodies. This striking piece invites careful reading of the articulation markings, consistency in short articulations, and faithfulness to the written-out pedal markings for a detailed interpretation.

Mazurka in A flat Major, op. 24, no. 3 by Frédéric Chopin

The mazurka is a Polish folk dance that Frédéric Chopin composed throughout his life. The dance evoked strong feelings of connection and nostalgia for him. In this Mazurka in A flat Major, op. 24, no. 3, understanding the meaning of the *con anima* marking—with animation or spirit—will facilitate a discussion about the inherent tempo plasticity in this piece. Pianists need a flexibility and elasticity in taking time in this Romantic and highly personal compositional style. In using *tempo rubato*, consider lingering on certain phrases and moving ahead in others. Teachers can encourage their students to carefully read and interpret the expressive markings; the accents and hairpins are dynamic but also potentially agogic markings that can denote taking time as well. This piece invites sophistication in tone production, singing tone, shape, and melodic nuance while still maintaining the dance character.

March, op. 65, no. 10 by Sergei Prokofiev

This sarcastic, tongue-in-cheek March by Sergei Prokofiev is a prime example of rhythmic implacability and an opportunity to create a relentless character in musical language. Encourage students to find the right feel for the *tempo di marcia* in the speed of an actual march so they can exploit the complete rhythmic, mechanical steadiness. A controlled and polished performance will feature playing the *staccato* markings, slurs, and accents exactly in time. The timing of the *subito* dynamics should also be completely precise and appropriately exaggerated. Teachers can encourage students to find the melodic opportunities here, adding textural and musical variety, such as in mm. 19–26, where the right hand may play the melody with a longer detached *portamento* touch.

Album Leaf, op. 12, no. 7 by Edvard Grieg

The dance-like opening theme in this Album Leaf by Edvard Grieg is accompanied by a playful left-hand chordal rhythm within a pedaled texture. The syncopated accents give the melody some piquancy; it is possible to slightly delay the second beat, placing the accents for greater melodic and rhythmic effect. There is an opportunity for the left hand to sing

here as well, adding sustained shaping to the long, flowing melody following the overall direction of the notes. Teachers can encourage students to interpret the *sforzando* markings in the context of an overall singing texture and to utilize the ample performance directions in the music to help give expressive variety to the piece.

Consolation, op. 30, no. 3 by Felix Mendelssohn

This *Consolation* by Felix Mendelssohn provides an opportunity for students to develop sustained, singing chordal playing and voicing within and between the hands, while at the same time shaping the melodies created by the top notes of the chords. Invite students to create a gentle tonal picture as the introduction and ending depict a tranquil chordal strumming, establishing the tonality and the tonic chord. The *sforzando* markings should be interpreted within the context of a singing tone and chordal texture. Students can be encouraged to listen to their technique in using syncopated pedal, with cleanly handled pedal changes. There is an overall simplicity in this piece, in the sense that there is one overarching melody projecting through the texture, but its performance requires sophistication in tone production and careful listening to line, phrasing, and pedal.

Allegro by Béla Bartók

This *Allegro* by Béla Bartók features a folk-like simplicity in the main melody that creates an opportunity for students to musically interpret this charming tune. Students are encouraged to cultivate an exaggerated clarity in the articulation, playing the detached notes with sharpness, expressing the stylistic simplicity. The piece features a drone-like left-hand accompaniment: a steady *legato ostinato* in eighth notes with thirds. Encourage students to play these chords very evenly with the double notes accurately depressing together; the articulation changes in the right hand should not disturb the regularity and accuracy here. When the *ostinato* pattern moves to the right hand, the left hand should mimic the character of the right hand when it played the melody, cultivating an independence between the hands. In the long pedal effects, invite students to continue the articulation despite depressing the damper pedal.

Waltz in B Minor, op. 18, D 145, no. 6 by Franz Schubert

This graceful Waltz by Franz Schubert features frequent melodic accents written into the music, sometimes on the first beats and sometimes on the second beats of the measures. Invite students to experiment with playing agogic accents in a lilting, Viennese style, dancing over the steady left-hand accompaniment. Students should shape the melody with smoothness and melodic line, often following the direction of the notes as they ascend and descend. A nuanced performance will include tonal and dynamic variety in the repeats of the melody as well as sensitivity to the unfolding harmonic progressions. There is an overall pedaled texture here and this presents an opportunity for students to listen for clean pedal changes.

***Biidaaban (First Light of Dawn)* by Barbara Assiginaak**

This atmospheric piece by Barbara Assiginaak, *Biidaaban*, features two birds singing together at the first light of dawn. It is written as a two-part texture, with each entrance of the “bird” written two beats apart. Encourage students to play with an incisive rhythm and thin-sounding timbre (emulating bird calls), utilizing sharp and precise sixteenth notes and dotted rhythms. The two voices written in high register mimic the fluttering and chirping of birds quite evocatively. To create this effect, follow the ample dynamic and expressive markings faithfully for a representational glimpse of an experience rooted in nature.

***Streams of Yang River* by An-Lun Huang**

Streams of Yang River, by An-Lun Huang, invites opportunities for playing with smoothness and flow, listening to musical texture, and cultivating a sensitivity to different registers. Students can practice their tonal control while the left hand plays staccato notes and the right hand plays the *legato* melody, all within a pedaled texture. Talk to students about the sound and intervals of the major pentatonic scale here, which imparts an overall smoothness and flow to the opening without the traditional dissonances of the major-minor tonality. Utilize echo effects to engender a sensitivity to registers, playing less in the higher register. The ensuing sixteenth notes should be played with smooth control and melodic contour, as water rippling on the surface of a stream, while the left-hand melody should be voiced and shaped, like water smoothly running down the length of the river.

***Canoeing, op. 119, no. 3* by Amy Beach**

Canoeing, by the prominent American composer Amy Beach, is a charming programmatic work written in a quasi-Romantic idiom. Featuring an overall pedaled texture, the broken chords may emulate the rippling of the water while the melody notes punctuate and sing through the texture like the oars of a canoe (these notes even look like canoe paddles on the page!). Students will enjoy singing the melody on the piano and projecting the melody notes over the undulating accompaniment, taking care that they create an overarching shape and direction. Encourage students to practice their syncopated pedaling so that the pedal changes are imperceptible within the overall texture. Cultivate a flowing, smooth, and seamless texture as the hands float and skim across the keys.

***Fantasy Bossa* by Christopher Norton**

In *Fantasy Bossa*, by Christopher Norton, students can orient themselves with playing in a jazz-inspired harmonic language in this nuanced piece. The opening theme, written in the middle to lower registers, invites a warm and expressive tone within an overall pedaled texture. Invite students to shape the long phrases with smoothness and intention using the harmonies as a guide for the emotional intensity and resolutions. Play the grace notes within the character of the piece to expressively ornament the melody. Also, faithfully follow the ample dynamic and expressive markings written into the music. The syncopated rhythms, gently introduced in the opening right and left hands, are a prominent feature of the piece, necessitating precise counting and subdividing of beats. The emotional climax of the piece features a chordal texture and changing time signatures, finishing off with the wistful return of the opening theme.

***The Ringtone Waltz* by Marc-André Hamelin**

This joking waltz inspired by the Nokia mobile-phone theme features harmonic sophistication and invites considerable tonal nuance. In *The Ringtone Waltz*, by Marc-André Hamelin, invite students to cultivate smooth *legato* control in the right-hand melody with direction, shape, and elasticity. While discussing and analyzing the advanced and sophisticated harmonies, students can also use this opportunity to practice voicing between the hands, making sure that the left-hand chordal accompaniment isn't too heavy. In the use of the pedal, practice syncopated pedaling mostly here. There is also an opportunity to introduce and use the *sostenuto* pedal in the last five measures of the piece. For pianos without this feature, a long damper pedal effect can also work very well; hold the damper pedal down while the right hand plays quietly, using a very sharp *staccato* touch.

***Banana Sorbet* by Gary K. Thomas**

Banana Sorbet by Gary K. Thomas features a rhythmic lilt throughout the piece with accented syncopations and contrasting tonal textures. Invite students to perform this piece leaning into the syncopations in a suave and lilting manner. The plentiful and carefully notated dynamics bring much to the student's interpretation and they should be followed faithfully to narrate the piece fully. Students can cultivate a harmonic sensitivity, such as an awareness of surprise bass movements with a subsequent dynamic change; for example, in m. 3, the F bass note should be played quietly as notated, almost as if unexpectedly. Encourage students to play the syncopated detached notes absolutely in time and build their interpretation on the implacable rhythmic stability here. The Latin rhythms and harmonies in this piece will be an opportunity for students to expand their interpretive vocabulary and skills.

***Peace Country Hoedown* by Christine Donkin**

The playful and rollicking *Peace Country Hoedown* by Christine Donkin features emphatic and clear rhythmic writing, with melodic syncopations and dynamic gradations. The tempo indication calls for a brisk tempo, with a cut-time feel; imagine the clapping and stomping of a hoedown to emulate this playful quality. Invite students to listen carefully to their dynamics, beginning at a piano dynamic level and managing the building intensity through *mezzo forte* and finally *forte*. Teachers can identify the melodic writing in this piece as well; in the syncopated right-hand thirds (m. 17–24), encourage students to create direction and line as the punctuated melodic accents ascend and descend. The right and left hands play the alternating eighth notes in very close proximity and require the hands to be evenly exchanged. Students will enjoy the continuous rhythmic feel and dance-like hopping in performing this piece.

***Ticklin' Toes* by Florence B. Price**

Florence Price was a trailblazing African American composer active in the first half of the 20th century. Her *Ticklin' Toes* is a light-hearted romp written in a popular and accessible

musical idiom. Encourage students to cultivate a strong rhythmic command to reflect the dance-like spirit and playfully accented syncopation notes. The grace notes need to speak with clarity and without interfering with the rhythm of the main melodic notes. This piece has a strong rhythmic groove, necessitating a strong pulse and an emphatic melodic character. The final *accelerando* should be played with even passagework despite its inherent technical challenges. Students will enjoy practicing this work until it can be played with ease and facility to impart the playful quality.

LEVEL 7

LEVEL 7 ETUDES

Toccata, op. 8, no. 1 by Samuel Maykapar

Feature:

- Finger dexterity in perpetual-motion figuration alternating between the hands

Tambourin, op. 2, no. 7 by Elisabetta de Gambarini

Feature:

- musical imagery with fanfare-style melody over broken-octave *ostinato*

Halley's Comet by Nancy Telfer

Feature:

- musical imagery with richly textured sustained chords

Etude in G Minor, op. 24, no. 15 by Guiseppe Concone

Feature:

- fluency, balance, and lightness of touch in dotted-rhythm and triplet figuration

Leafy Sea Dragon by Ina Dykstra

Feature:

- melodic shaping over rolling broken-chord accompaniment

Etude in C sharp Minor, op. 125, no. 19 by Stephen Heller

Feature:

- articulation in rapid-scale and broken-chord figuration; lyrical episode with extended trills

***Chickadees* by Teresa Richert**

Feature:

- light, delicate touch in *cantabile* melody and broken-chord accompaniments

***Dancing Barefoot in the Rain* by Nkeiru Okoye**

Feature:

- shifting patterns with focused articulation in rapidly changing meters

***Running Around, op. 105, no. 4* by Dianne Goolkasian Rahbee**

Feature:

- perpetual motion sixteenth-note figuration with subtle *staccato* accompaniment

***Lullaby, op. 109, no. 7* by Johann Friedrich Burgmüller**

Feature:

- expressively contoured *cantabile* line with balanced broken-chord accompaniment

***White Noon* by Naoko Ikeda**

Feature:

- contoured lyrical line with broken-chord accompaniment in changing meters

***Mischievous Mouse* by Vincent Ho**

Feature:

- subtle dynamic changes and strategic pedalling in sixteenth-note figuration

***White Sands, Blue Seas* by Gary K. Thomas**

Feature:

- voicing, projection, and precisely- patterned articulation in syncopated figuration

Zephyr by Christine Donkin

Feature:

- touch control, expressive shaping, and tonal balance
 - LEVEL 8
 - LEVEL 8 REPERTOIRE

The repertoire and etudes in Level 8 represent a transition into the early advanced level, with more frequent inclusion of works from the concert literature.

For Level 8 examinations, students present four repertoire selections and two etudes:

- **List A:** Baroque Repertoire
- **List B:** Classical Repertoire
- **List C:** Romantic Repertoire
- **List C:** Post-Romantic, 20th-, and 21st-century Repertoire
- **Etudes:** two technically contrasting etudes

Select any piece to learn more about it.

List A: Baroque Repertoire

Invention No. 14 in B flat Major, BWV 785 by Johann Sebastian Bach

This bright, attractive piece comes from J.S. Bach's well-loved collection of inventions. Many of Bach's most recognizable characteristics can be found in these consistently pattern-based pages: a cheerful contrapuntal dialogue, elegant Baroque finger work (highlighted by equally elegant articulation), and just enough brain-tickling rhythmic work. The student may notice that Bach's "winged" patterns throughout often exceed an octave; while comfort navigating the scalar and harmonic contours of B flat major is a prerequisite, planning ahead with intelligent fingering will lead to success in this piece. Approaching Bach's use of sequence throughout, students might be encouraged to block the harmonies (for instance, the first three measures might be practiced in this way, with the B-flat pedal tone in the bass held). Where "dialoguing" occurs (for example, in mm. 12–13), students might practice only the conversational texture first, working on balance and incorporating articulation. Synchronicity between the hands may be a special area for focus, particularly in such passages as mm. 14–16.

Little Prelude in E Major, BWV 937 by Johann Sebastian Bach

The optimistic character of J.S. Bach's Little Prelude in E Major provides a wonderful invitation into the world of contrapuntal dialogue which is such a fundamental aspect of Bach's keyboard music in any genre. While ornamentation and articulation are certainly considerations here (for instance, the most standard stylistic approach would be to treat most or all of the eighth notes in a detached manner), the main interest is really in navigating this back-and-forth writing in a way which resembles a true conversation. The left hand in m. 3 clearly imitates the opening material—this would be a moment for the student to practice voicing to reveal the music to the listener. The richness of Bach's accompaniment reveals itself throughout; while at times more supportive, in places such as m. 11, it seems almost more interesting that what one might at assume to be melodic, and in many moments its compound melody mirrors the principal melody.

Fantasia in D Minor, TWV 33:2 by Georg Philipp Telemann

Telemann's Fantasia in D Minor is a spacious musical landscape filled with drama, providing students with an opportunity to explore a larger-scale Baroque structure (in preparation for toccatas and extended suite movements). In cut time, its brisk tempo underlines the kinetic energy and crisp articulation needed to create a convincing performance. Throughout the opening section, both hands function in a way that resembles a double concerto (perhaps with two violin soloists)—finding ways of creating a sense of interaction between both parts is one of the most exciting aspects of this score. Developing phrase-shape and sympathetic dynamics will go far in creating such a dialogue in episodes like mm. 5–10. Crisply articulated quarter notes (mm. 33 and 37) and disciplined navigation of the rests will contribute to the dance-like energy throughout. For the contrasting Adagio section (starting in m. 79), the student may perform the chords in an arpeggiated fashion.

Courante in G Major attr. George Frideric Handel

This graceful, fluid dance movement is beautifully written for the keyboard. While it may be played consistently in three, finding the courante's characteristic hidden hemiola in Handel's patterning will create a richer, more rhythmically vibrant performance (for instance, for mm. 8–10, the student may work to feel the eighth notes as if in 6/8 meter before the rhythmic "correction" in m. 11). The handful of ornaments require rehearsal as in other Baroque dances; where some of these decorate a fluid contour of eighth notes (for example, m. 18), an especially crisp and careful articulation is needed, as well as a more global consideration of tempo. Sequential episodes are almost always embroidered with compound melody; shaping these episodes is a special area for focus, as well as underpinning each with an expressively supportive dynamic structure.

Sonata in F Minor, K 185 by Domenico Scarlatti

Scarlatti's Sonata in F Minor, K 185 leaves a haunting impression. The writing is terse and economical. Seen throughout is Scarlatti's love of echo effects, which should be tinted with a dynamic underpinning. For instance, in mm. 26–28, the student might adopt a *sotto voce* approach with the repeat in m. 27 increasing the volume again in m. 28. The astonishing harmonic and expressive adventurousness of the second area (from m. 36) can go almost

unnoticed without sensitivity on the part of the performer. Students might adopt a darker tone color in m. 38, where the music unexpectedly dips into E flat minor. In contrast, Scarlatti's subtle dissonance in m. 48 may be best supported by an intensification of dynamics and voicing, highlighting the piquant D flat/C natural clash.

Solfeggio in C Minor, Wq 117/2, H 220 by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach

This well-known piece is a wonderfully accessible entry-point to the enormous keyboard output of C.P.E. Bach. The patterning throughout is not dissimilar from that found in many of J.S. Bach's prelude-type movements, and while it fits beautifully under the hand, navigating with a seamless fluency between the hands can be challenging. Students might be encouraged to find ways of linking the hands into one "unit" (for example, practicing the shared scalar contours with matching articulations or dynamics), and to cultivate evenness in rhythm. While brilliance of articulation can be an impressive component of a successful performance of this piece, students should be careful to avoid inadvertent accents—in the very first measure is a performance example of this hazard. There are also many opportunities for dynamic surprise—one of the most exciting at mm. 14–15.

Gigue en rondeau by Jean-Philippe Rameau

Rameau's three books of *Pièces de clavecin* are filled with gems, and in this dance-suite movement, one encounters a haunting distillation of melancholy. Every notated detail must be carefully considered—such as the first two beats of the piece, in which a fascinating tonic–dominant displacement (in left hand) creates a momentary metrical ambiguity. Delicacy and refinement in ornaments is essential to develop throughout, but particularly where the ornament must be coordinated with a contrapuntal left hand (m. 17). The transparent, expressively attractive quality of this score might invite temptation to take a more spacious tempo, but students should be sure to establish a tempo which is appropriate to the gigue, and contextually, other movements of the suite (for instance the slower sarabande).

List B: Classical Repertoire

Sonata in D Major, Hob. XVI:4: First Movement by Franz Joseph Haydn

Like many of Haydn's early keyboard works, this sonata was written for the harpsichord, and the elegance of this courtly instrument may inform students' approach. Texturally and musically transparent (but far from trifling!), this movement benefits greatly from pianistic sensitivity; as such, pedal may be sparing, if used at all. The delicate articulation of accompaniment figuration (and the rests that punctuate these textures) is an important area for study—for instance, in the lightness of the left hand's opening double-notes. Throughout the opening passage, students will encounter an exciting variety of ornaments (seven different executions in total); the rhythmic idiosyncrasy of those in mm. 2 and 16 might be singled out for particular work. The absence of dynamics in this score may serve as an

invitation to create a vibrant dynamic landscape; a perfect place to start might be the frequent repetitive phrases (mm. 3–4).

Sonatina in G Major, op. 55, no. 2: Third Movement by Friedrich Kuhlau

Students wishing to put their scale technique to good use need look no further than this attractive sonatina movement filled with buoyant energy and characteristic flair. Kuhlau uses familiar patterning throughout but throws in more than one curve ball: small directional changes (mm. 41–42), unexpected thirds (m. 2), as well as repeated notes within scalar contours (m. 6)—these details provide a healthy challenge. Throughout, the student may explore ways of underpinning the scalar writing with sweeping phrase-shape and directional musical thinking. Otherwise, one technically hazardous moment at m. 22 might be singled out for special attention; here the student might be encouraged to ground the right hand to free the left hand for a large leap. The movement provides an equally valuable roadmap to engaging with many important aspects of sonata form, including the harmonically adventurous transitional episode (for example, mm. 27–40). Lightness of the left-hand's punctuating accompaniment is crucial here.

Sonata in C Major, K 545: First Movement by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

This perennially popular movement is a wonderful entry point to the sonatas of Mozart. Many hallmarks of Mozart's approach to keyboard writing are plentiful here: the music is tuneful and melodically driven with elegant phrase inflections—these require special detail and attention in such moments as mm. 14–17, where the slight breaths between phrases must be handled with the greatest care, avoiding inadvertent accents on releases. Scalic contours inundate these pages, but Mozart's inventiveness requires thoughtful planning and directional control in moments such as mm. 9–11 and mm. 50–51; students might practice some of these scales in "sprints" to each directional boundary (these do not necessarily correspond to the intuitive fingering). Managing the left-hand's accompaniment patterning in the second theme area (from m. 13) is crucial to develop a clockwork synchronicity with right hand's ornament in m. 15.

Sonata in G Minor, op. 49, no. 1: First Movement by Ludwig van Beethoven

The gentle melancholy of this sonata pairs nicely with the sunny athleticism of its companion work (the Sonata in G Major, op. 49, no. 2). In contrast to the opening of that piece, students will find fewer scalic and arpeggio-based patterning and more rich, double-note textures. The accompaniment contours in thirds with which the movement commences (mm. 1–3) fit nicely into G minor and D major pentascales. Students might practice thirds in these positions, promoting precision in synchronicity and *legato*. It should also be pointed out that an attractive, and very "Beethovenian," aspect of this score is how it sometimes reflects the composer's orchestral writing. In moments like mm. 10 and 12, students might be invited to imagine an orchestral *tutti*, where multiple sections of the orchestra join to punctuate a moment expressively. Similarly, different instrumental colors can be imagined in the phrase repetitions that follows, such as in mm. 16–19. Embedded voice leading throughout might

be practiced melodically. Presenting each ornament brilliantly and crisply is another important area for focus.

Sonata in B flat Major, C 27 by Domenico Cimarosa

A contemporary of Mozart, Cimarosa was a prolific composer of opera and keyboard music. This piece bears many hallmarks of its era, including textural clarity and repeated phrase structures (which invite terraced dynamic approaches), as well as Alberti bass and rocket patterning. A brilliant, precise articulation must be developed throughout; a high level of detail and precision will lead to success in the opening's ornaments (from m. 5) and in the flashy repeated-note rockets from m. 21. A global view of the movement reveals an almost nonstop pulse of sixteenth notes; student must keep an immaculate rhythmic underpinning throughout. At the same time, the melodic contours so frequently mirrored in the accompaniment (for example, mm. 11–12) will be most convincing if phrased in a horizontal way—students might practice these *legato* without the pedal tone, focusing on the duet aspect of the writing.

List C: Romantic Repertoire

***Mélodie*, op. 4, no. 2 by Fanny Hensel**

A haunting, harmonically elusive quality permeates Fanny Hensel's *Mélodie*. The unwavering *ostinato* in sixteenth notes provides a rhythmic apparatus anchoring tendrils of melody and bass bedrock. Students might be invited to imagine narratives or explore 19th-century pieces where a similar musical device refers to something programmatic (Schubert's *Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel* comes to mind). In a three-part texture of this nature, rehearsal of each layer (rather than simply hands-separate practice) is an excellent way to practice. Resultant from this texture are some moments which require nimble finger work. For instance, the right hand in mm. 5–6: here the integrity of *legato* depends on a series of successful finger substitutions. A sensitive pedal approach is essential throughout; while some of the left hand might be tempting for students with larger hands to connect, this can quickly lead to over-extension. Hensel's sometimes unexpected harmonic journey is an exciting aspect of this score—a successful performance will make each of these moments truly surprising.

***Song without Words*, op. 38, no. 4 by Felix Mendelssohn**

Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words* comprise his largest contribution to keyboard literature. While many familiar examples fall in the solo and duet song category, this example is a cheery, almost anthem-like part-song. Except for the lute-like introduction and postlude (in which the student might strive to create an almost gossamer transparency), the wordless song is richly textured in full, four-part harmony throughout. The primary challenges result from this thicket of counterpoint; students must skillfully create a sense of hierarchy by balancing each part and might rehearse each voice independently (like a choral conductor!). Generally, the chordal writing is rhythmically consistent, but there are moments where the student must carry two rhythmically independent parts in one hand (such mm. 5–6, and m.

16), and these moments should be singled out for special work. For students with small hands, some redistribution might be helpful (for instance, the tenor in m. 10 from beat 2 might be taken in the right hand).

Polonaise in C Major, op. 1, no. 2 by Clara Schumann

Astoundingly, Clara Schumann's Polonaise in C Major was written when she was only eleven. Already this piece shows signs of the masterful composer–pianist she would become in later years, featuring an ease with virtuoso, salon-style writing, as well as a sly sense of local harmonic surprise. While the polonaise rhythm is detected explicitly only once (m. 20), the piece provides an attractive introduction to this aristocratic Polish dance (so famously re-imagined as a virtuoso concert piece by Chopin). Students will enjoy tackling the flashy right-hand virtuoso arpeggiations (mm. 2, 6, and elsewhere) and the double-thirds in mm. 13–14; here, grounding the left-hand bass note will prove helpful. Students may find the re-positioning involved in this area more challenging and might rehearse the leaps by “ghosting” practice. The Trio is filled with elegant details; those in the right hand of mm. 27 and 31 may be singled out for careful consideration.

Waltz in B Minor, op. posth. 69, no. 2 by Frédéric Chopin

Chopin's posthumously published Waltz in B Minor is a youthful work, but many tell-tale signs point to the later master–composer: *luminous bel canto* melodic contours, intimate poeticism, and stately elegance. Students will find the greatest technical hurdles in the middle B major episode, particularly in the dance-step dotted rhythms (mm. 53–56) and double-note combinations, which require work in the weak part of the hand (mm. 65–67). The repetitive phrase structure throughout is an opportunity for students to deepen their palette of tone color and experiment with applications of *rubato*. Chopin's writing fits beautifully under the hand but often asks just as much from “weak” fingers as strong fingers; students may focus especially on transitional moments (for example, mm. 13–14). Creating expressive vibrance and a true *cantabile* character in this piece is dependent on navigating the right hand with fluency and ease.

Prelude in E flat Major, op. 31, no. 1 by Reinhold Glière

Glière's Prelude in E flat Major is full of riches for lovers of late 19th-century Romanticism: impossibly long-breathed melodies, attractively prismatic harmonic palette, and expressive climaxes, all underpinned by a literal rhythmic heartbeat. Students exploring this rewarding piece must take care to balance and sustain these melodic contours robustly as they thread in and out of thickets of chordal texture (for example, m. 8). *Rubato* is one of the most exciting things to explore here, and harmonic rhythm provides an invaluable guide, particularly in such a spot as m. 17. Students might be cautioned to take an especially detailed, thorough approach to note-learning, which clarifies the underpinning harmonic structure; given the piece's inventive and often unexpected harmony, some occasional briar-patches of accidentals (m. 17) may be singled out for special focus.

Knecht Ruprecht, op. 68, no. 12 by Robert Schumann

Robert Schumann's inimitable keyboard works are filled with imagination, and in this piece the chivalrous medieval character is depicted with writing that is evocative and often very fun to play. Students might note the energy suggested by Schumann's frequent use of *marcato* and conspicuous *forte* markings in m. 4—the opening ascent could almost portray a knight mounting the jousting saddle! Schumann tosses in some athletic challenges in the form of leaps (the right hand in mm. 10–11)—students may practice the left hand *legato* across the bar line to promote security while the right hand negotiates the leap. The more lyrical middle episode adopts the trilling sixteenth notes of the opening, but they migrate more frequently. Noting and rehearsing where hand positions change rapidly (for instance the left hand in m. 26) will aid in developing security. Students also should note the long phrase markings, in contrast to the clipped ones in the outer sections; these provide a fun challenge, particularly when the *legato* melodic contour at m. 37 emerges.

Arabeske by Josephine Lang

As a genre, the 19th-century arabesque is often characterized by an economic approach to pianistic figuration, but with a vibrant expressive fabric. This is abundantly true of German composer Josephine Lang's *Arabeske*, which enfolds moments of tender poetry (mm. 12–15) with impassioned drama (mm. 60–67) and atmospheric *lusingando* (mm. 68–72). Pianistically, balance and control of textural layers will support a convincing interpretation—the interior pulsing accompaniment must be particularly hushed. Lang's repetitive phrase structures welcome the student's expressive engagement, and there are many ways to do this (for instance, where the opening returns identically in m. 16, students might experiment with voicing the left hand's melodic sighs more robustly).

Nocturne in B flat Major, H 37 by John Field

Irish pianist-composer John Field is usually credited with the invention of the nocturne as a genre, and the creative pianistic template he developed has been subsequently adopted by most composers approaching this type of work. One of the most distinctive of these materials is the luxurious left-hand “canvas,” which supports a beautiful, *cantabile* melody. Throughout, students might be encouraged to distribute some of the dynamic weight towards the right hand, keeping the undulating accompaniment as tranquil as possible. Elsewhere, the small ebbs and flows in the accompaniment itself may guide application of *rubato* (such as the cadential m. 17). Students may practice the *portato* chordal passage (mm. 18–21) by initially isolating the top chromatic thread and playing it *legato* to internalize the implicit melodic content. In the opening section's embellished return, there is much fun to be had in tackling the *fioritura*; the primary challenge is often more rhythmic than acrobatic, as in m. 24 (syncopation) and m. 28 (polyrhythms).

List D: Post-Romantic, 20th-, and 21st-century Repertoire

The Spruce, op. 75, no. 5 by Jean Sibelius

Sibelius's love of landscape and the nature of his native Finland echo in this glorious, rhapsodic piece. The opening gives a hint of what is to come later in the cadenza in m. 40;

pacing the dynamic and rhythmic undercurrents here is essential. The indication *con suono* is an invitation for the student to deepen their most robust tone colors, creating a warm, resonant sound throughout the opening section, in which the inner melodic contour shines brightest. Navigating some slightly fluid rhythmic crosscurrents (mm. 14–15 and mm. 29–31) is a challenge, as is keeping a consistent pulse in moments where the chords are tied across the bar line (m. 35). Students may feel more comfortable with some of these hemiola effects by emphasizing the rhythmic stresses in these groups. From m. 40, practicing the right-hand chordal transitions will aid in fluency, and in the last half of this episode, practicing a seamless fluency in hand-to-hand patterning will pay dividends.

***The Little Shepherd* by Claude Debussy**

The dedication of Debussy's suite *Children's Corner* reads, "To my dear little Chouchou, with tender apologies from her father for what follows"—surely no apology was necessary, as evidenced when exploring these gems. *The Little Shepherd* features many of Debussy's musical innovations, with perhaps the most exciting being his pictorial pianism and sense of harmonic color. Students might find inspiration in the image of the Shepherd playing a flute (mm. 1–4, 12–13, and 19–20); creating a sense of improvisatory musical expression will be promoted by internalizing the exact rhythm here. Clarifying the harmonic language will likely prove advantageous—for instance, students might find it helpful to think of the Lydian writing from m. 12 as an A major scale with raised fourth.

***Seven Good-humored Variations on a Ukrainian Folk Song*, op. 51, no. 4 by Dmitri Kabalevsky**

Kabalevsky's set of variations on a Ukrainian folk tune are full of fun and humor. The folksy setting is established immediately by raised fourth grace-notes in the left hand—these drone effects might be likened to the sound of a rustic instrument like the bagpipes. Mastering Kabalevsky's characteristic articulations is key to a convincing performance, particularly in the first variation, where punchy *marcato* syncopations are juxtaposed with tinkling *leggiero staccato*. Contrast is an essential element of variation form, and students will find much variety to engage with in this work. Creating the sometimes turn-on-a-dime expressive characters is a fun challenge in Variation IV, where dynamic contrast is sudden (mm. 56–57, mm. 60–61) and in Variation V, where rhythmic trickery is afoot (mm. 65–68). The pianistically satisfying Variation VII (and *coda*) provides a chance for the student's "tenor thumb" to shine; sustaining and voicing this texture is an important area for study here.

***Through Moanin' Pines* by Harry T. Burleigh**

African American composer Harry T. Burleigh was an important and influential figure in late 19th- and early 20th-century music. His interest in the spiritual is echoed in this beautiful melodic piece, whose tunefulness is instantly captivating. Students must cultivate a luminous, *cantabile* approach to the long melodic contours that unfold over rich harmonic buttressing. While some of these harmonic voicing may need to be rolled (m. 6, for instance), some nimble choreography (and pedaling) will allow the *legato* melody to be maintained. It is equally important to bring across Burleigh's detailed voice leading; one rather difficult moment occurs at the very end (mm. 38–39), where students must sensitively listen to very

last resolution (E to A); this requires tremendous tonal control but the results can be breathtaking!

Prelude No. 3 by Michael Valenti

Michael Valenti's Prelude No. 3 is a welcome introduction to a composer known for his musical theatre work. The writing fits comfortably in the hand (with only a few chordal stretches reaching an octave), but demands an agile accuracy in navigating rapid positional changes, as well as sudden *subito* shifts in dynamics and articulation (such as in m. 4). But perhaps the most distinctive aspect of this score is its undeniably groovy rhythms; students must be completely comfortable slipping back-and-forth between 44 and 54, while avoiding some slyly placed pitfalls, such as in m. 17, which adopts the rhythmic grouping of previous 54 measures but remains in 44! The recurring lyrical episode enfolds a gentle call-and-response (mm. 24–30); voicing the moving parts within chordal textures is important to lift out this detail. Valenti's mischievous addition of grace notes to the opening music creates a final (significant) challenge—students must work to develop lightness and synchronicity to surmount it.

Incognito (Jazz Nocturne) by Jason Sifford

Incognito's inventive genre-blend offers a wealth of learning opportunities for students interested in jazz styles (and Chopin!). The bluesy nonchalance of the left-hand stride must be approached with a nimble pedal technique that allows the chordal *staccato* to remain crisp while being accented. As in many 19th-century nocturnes, the large phrase periods of melody must also be sustained and contoured in a tonally organic manner. From m. 9, the sudden appearance of a duet is an opportunity to deepen tonal and dynamic nuance, and balance of texture. Control of dynamics (particularly those on the hushed end of the spectrum) is crucial in delivering a convincing performance in the outer sections, and the middle episode's climax (mm. 41–49) will be immensely effective with a patient, long-term pacing of dynamics.

Mysterious Summer's Night by Larysa Kuzmenko

This sumptuous piece by Canadian composer Larysa Kuzmenko is excitingly elusive, yet at the same time very accessible. The harmonic language at times suggests jazz styles, the left-hand patterning at times a waltz, and the dynamics are delightfully kaleidoscopic. Success in sustaining and projecting a long melodic contour is essential in this "summer nocturne," particularly long-breathed phrases like the one from mm. 3–4. Pedal approach requires careful thought and study, since the harmonic rhythm is not always consistent or predictable. The sudden *molto espressivo* outburst in m. 9 is a highlight of the score. Pacing this surprise in a convincing manner is crucial, with tastefully applied *rubato* to support this effect. In addition to phrase-to-phrase *rubato*, more local applications might be explored as well; for instance, in melodic contours, where larger intervals may benefit from a slight stretch.

Blue Angel by Stephan Chatman

Written in memory of Aaron Copland, Stephen Chatman's *Blue Angel* is a spacious and resonant canvas, echoing the open sonorities of Copland's own music. The chief pianistic challenge lies in the double-note writing, which spans the entirety of the piece. While Chatman's opening fingering suggestion gives a good idea of how one might prepare many of these chordal groups, students must give thought to choreographing spots like mm. 5–6, in which both hands must navigate at least one leap in contrary motion. Frequently, the writing does not conform to an underpinning quadruple pulse, and Chatman's detailed pedaling often highlights this as well. Following this pedaling as closely as possible is essential in presenting a convincing performance.

***Catching Butterflies* by Shande Ding**

Catching Butterflies by Chinese composer Shande Ding sparkles with character and energy. Its texture is consistently chordal and toccata-like but must remain delicate and crystalline. Students might note how much of the score is, in fact, piano. There is much fun to be had in the gymnastic hand-crossings (from m. 2), but also in navigating an unpredictable rhythmic underpinning which seems very well to depict the capricious flight of the butterfly. In a spot like mm. 25–27, students might first practice rhythmic “sketching,” playing only beats 1 and 3, then beats 1, 2, 3, and 4, and finally filling in the whole episode. Dynamic control must be sharp and consistent—both in pacing of gradual swells (mm. 19–23) and in sudden, turn-on-a-dime shifts (m. 10).

***Tango callejero* by Mike Springer**

The rhythmically vital piano works by Argentinians like Piazzolla and Ginastera are echoed in Mike Springer's *Tango callejero* (“street tango”). Students encountering this style for the first time might be inspired by listening to bandoneon performances of Piazzolla himself, one of the undisputed kings of tango. Characteristic of the idiom is a comfort with rhythmic flexibility and complexity—students will have a crash course in navigating syncopation (m. 9), polyrhythms of three-against-four and two-against-three (mm. 3 and 27), and managing decorative filigree within this fluidity (m. 18). The high level of rhythmic control is the chief challenge throughout, and “micro-pulsing”/subdividing will be a constant aid for internalization of this rich metrical landscape. The piece peaks expressively in m. 17—pacing this impassioned outburst with patience is crucial for a successful performance.

***Prelude (Twilight)*, op. 69 by Dianne Goolkasian Rahbee**

Armenian-American composer Dianne Goolkasian Rahbee's “twilight” *Prelude* is lyrically memorable and harmonically piquant. The primary pianistic challenge involved is in maintaining her direction “extremely fragile, delicate and gentle” while balancing widely spaced, two-part textures (mm. 1–3), and in executing athletic patterning (mm. 10 and 12). As in any piece where one hand carries two textures, students might practice each part individually, ideally with their chosen fingering; in the opening measures, the recurring E natural ought to remain soft and inconspicuous. Developing comfort in extensional patterning (from m. 10) requires elasticity in the hand and a well-rehearsed flexibility with opening and closing the palm. Students with smaller hands should take extra care in these

moments to nimbly navigate note to note, without straining to hold a large position in the hand.

***Sunshower* by Martha Hill Duncan**

Martha Hill Duncan's *Sunshower* is a wonderfully evocative piece, perfect for students interested in exploring an atmospheric, radiant sound-world. Creating a convincing sense of atmosphere depends largely on students' success in observation of dynamic indications throughout—many of these are within a measure or two (mm. 8–10) but point to a larger dynamic plan. Elsewhere (mm. 22–26), pacing is crucial. A generous use of pedal will support the polychromatic scales found in the middle episode—students will enjoy navigating these highly colorful note-collections (mm. 30 and 34) that fit marvellously under the hand. Given that much of the right-hand writing fits intuitively into a pentascale, moments where this patterning is altered might be singled out for special rehearsal; for instance in mm. 34–35, 45, and 47, where the hand must migrate through several positions smoothly.

LEVEL 8

LEVEL 8 ETUDES

***The Storm, op. 109, no. 13* by Johann Friedrich Burgmüller**

Feature:

- musical imagery with shifting broken-chord patterns, *tremolos*, octaves, and occasional lyrical gestures

***Village Joke* by Béla Bartók**

Feature:

- whimsical combination of a modal melody with quintuplet flourish and an accompaniment with wide leaps, shifting rhythms, and dissonant clashes

***Romanza, op. 57, no. 4* by Niels Gade**

Feature:

- lyrical line and voicing in chordal textures with slurred and *portato* articulation

***Open* by Janet Gieck**

Feature:

- spaciousness with open intervals, ascending lyrical lines, expressive inflections, and leisurely pacing

***Murmures du ruisseau* by Marie Jaëll**

Feature:

- musical imagery with perpetual-motion broken-chord figuration divided between the hands

***Sieste caniculaire (Berceuse), op. 82, no. 3* by Rachel Laurin**

Feature:

- lyrical line, voicing, and coordinated pedaling in complex textures

***Bolero, op. 35, no. 4* by Alfredo Casella**

Feature:

- musical imagery with evocative rhythmic gestures, melodic designs, and unifying *ostinato*

***Flip Flops* by Gary K. Thomas**

Feature:

- precision and clarity with rhythmic shifts, *staccatos*, and accents in syncopated figuration and changing meters

***The Woodpecker* by Maggie Lu**

Feature:

- toccata-style clarity with *staccatos*, accents, and slurs in figuration alternating between the hands

***Etude in C Major (The Wild Surf), op. 46, no. 24* by Stephen Heller**

Feature:

- rhythmic precision, melodic projection, and directed phrasing in contrasting figures

***Etude in A Major, op. 27, no. 26* by Dmitri Kabalevsky**

Feature:

- melodic shaping, projection, and contrasting dynamics in broken-chord triplet figuration

Etude in C Major, op. 299, no. 3 by Carl Czerny

Feature:

- evenness, fluency, and shaping in widely spaced broken chords

***Dance of the Elves*, op. 21, no. 3 by Génari Karganov**

Feature:

- fluency, melodic shaping, and balance in sixteenth-note figuration over lightly textured chordal accompaniments