

ESSENTIAL TWO-PIANO REPERTOIRE

20 Late Intermediate/Early Advanced Selections

in Their Original Form

Baroque to Modern

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Historical Background

Music for two pianos holds a special place in the realm of chamber music. There is a large and varied repertoire for this type of ensemble, which includes not only sonatas, variations and character pieces, but also transcriptions, etudes and virtuosic concert works. The wide range of literature reflects the unique characteristics of this medium: the antiphonal quality of the two instruments, the variety of textures available, and the large palette of sound—almost orchestral in scope—that is also capable of the more intimate aspects of chamber music.

The literature for two pianos (piano duos) has essentially seen a continuous development from the middle of the 18th century—with the advent of the piano itself—to the present day. Composers such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791), Johannes Brahms (1833–1897), Claude Debussy (1862–1918), Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873–1943) and Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971) all recognized the expressive possibilities of combining two pianos and made some of the most outstanding contributions to the repertoire.

The earliest examples of music written for two keyboards are from the late 16th and early 17th centuries: an arrangement of a French *chanson*, *Belle sans per* (“Beauty Beyond Compare”) by Thomas Crequillon (c. 1505–1557) and *For Two Virginals* by English composer Giles Farnaby (c. 1563–1640). In the Baroque era, the music for this medium continued to develop with works by Bernardo Pasquini (1637–1710) and François Couperin (1668–1733) and culminated in the multi-keyboard concertos of J. S. Bach (1685–1750). Bach’s sons, Carl Philipp Emanuel (1714–1788) and Johann

Christian (1735–1782) each experimented with the developing piano and contributed pieces that served as models for later composers.

About This Collection

To facilitate easy reading, the pieces in this collection are presented in score form, with Piano I and Piano II parts both appearing on the same page; therefore, two copies

are needed for performance. All of the pieces were originally written for two keyboards and are arranged chronologically by the composer’s birth date. The selections provide a historical guide to the piano duo repertoire at this level, from the 18th to the early 20th centuries.

Biographies of the composers and information on the works presented in the collection can be found at the end of the book.

Fingering, redistributions and all parenthetical material are editorial. Ornaments in both parts are realized in footnotes at their initial appearance in each work. Performers are encouraged to experiment with additional ornamentation and other realizations as appropriate to the work’s style and level of the players.

Pedaling is largely left to the discretion of the performers. Footnotes indicate the few instances where the composer’s original pedal markings appear. In general, two-piano performance requires lighter pedaling than solo playing. Final decisions on pedal usage depend on a number of considerations including musical intentions, balance, acoustics, the actual instruments and the level of the performers.

Balance between the two instruments is crucial in two-piano playing. While some composers suggest a louder dynamic level for the more prominent part, some indicate the same level for both parts. Players

will need to be aware of the many layers found in two-piano writing, the featured melodic material, and how the dynamics in both parts relate to each other.

Pedagogical Value

Two-piano music opens up an exciting world of sound and expression for pianists and provides important ensemble playing experience. Studying this literature develops listening skills, technique, rhythmic control and overall musicianship. These works make excellent repertoire selections for piano ensemble classes in both the private studio and at the college level. The literature is also appropriate for group lessons and recitals featuring student ensembles or teacher and student duos.

Suggested Reading

- Bigler, Carole and Valerie Lloyd-Watts. *Ornamentation: A Question & Answer Manual*. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Music, 1995.
- Faurot, Albert and Frederic Ming Chang. *Team Piano Repertoire*. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1976.
- Ferguson, Howard. *Keyboard Duets from the 16th to the 20th Century*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1995.
- Hinson, Maurice. *Music for More Than One Piano*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1983.
- Moldenhauer, Hans. *Duo Pianism*. Chicago, IL: Chicago Musical College Press, 1950.

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ALLEMANDE

from *Suite for Two Keyboards*

Johann Mattheson
(1681–1764)

(Moderato)

I

II

mf

mp

mf

p

3

cresc.

cresc.

mf

1 2 5 1 2 5 1 3 2 1 3 1 1 3 2 1

5 1 2 5 1 2 5 1 3 2 4 3 5

1 2 5 1 5 2 4 3 5

1 2 5 1 3 2 4 3 2 1

1 2 3 1 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 2 4

1 2 3 1 3 2 1

4 1 1 4 3

3 1 1 3

2 1 1

1 3 1 3

43

Ⓐ Ⓑ All dynamics are editorial.

Ⓒ



No. 4

Allegro

I

II

5

32 *tr*

p *mf*

3 3

4 *tr*

p *mp*

2 2

Ⓐ Ⓑ All dynamics are editorial.



SONATA IN G MAJOR

Johann Christian Bach (1735–1782)

Op. 15, No. 5

Allegro

I

II

I

II

I

II

I

II

Ⓐ Ⓑ Dynamics and articulations are editorial.

Ⓒ Play as four equal 16th notes on the beat.



Ⓔ Play the grace note on the beat, almost simultaneously with the main note.