

This is from the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*, from the late Renaissance period, which was also known as *Queen Elizabeth's Virginal Book*. It included nearly 300 pieces for the virginal written by respected composers of the time such as Bull, Morley and Tallis. A 'ho-hoane' ('oh alas') is a lament.

The lines crossing the note stems indicate ornaments. At this point in history, ornaments were improvised and had not been specifically defined, but these were most likely to be upper or lower mordents or trills. Try including some of these in the music.

Notice the unusual time signature. If you imagine bar lines halfway through each bar, the music could take on an elegant triple feel, hence the 3.



Repertoire

The Irishe Ho-hoane

Anon
(ca 1562–1612)

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a treble and bass clef. The key signature is one flat (Bb). The time signature is 3/4, with a 6/4 time signature indicated above the first bar of each system. The score includes various ornaments, such as mordents and trills, indicated by lines crossing the note stems. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.



Musicianship

The tonal centre of this piece is D, and it's in the Aeolian mode (D E F G A B \flat C D). Play this scale with different dynamics and articulation.

Most keyboard music of the Renaissance period had no articulation or dynamic indications. Add your own markings to the score above.



The concert pianist

Renaissance keyboard music presents interesting challenges for the modern pianist. A realistic goal would be to create a restrained but vivid musical experience, not to try to replicate the sounds or effects possible on a virginal, clavichord or harpsichord. When you've freed yourself to play with imagination and expression, your instincts over dynamics, articulation and tempi will kick in with conviction.



Composer gallery

Bridge timeline

Dussek 1760–1812

Beethoven 1770–1827

Hummel 1778–1837

Weber 1786–1826

Czerny 1791–1857

Schubert 1797–1828

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

Who? Like Haydn, Schubert was a chorister. He was also an able violinist and brilliant songwriter. Alongside his composing and performing, he worked as a teacher in his father's school and as a music teacher for the Esterházy family.

What? Schubert was a prolific songwriter producing approximately 600 works along with 20 piano sonatas, symphonies and operas, overtures and masses. He is celebrated for his chamber music; *The Trout* is a particularly famous piano quintet he wrote early in his career.

When? Schubert lived a short life, dying at the age of just 31. Diagnosed as having typhoid, it was rumoured that he'd contracted syphilis. In his short career, he wrote some of the most loved songs and chamber music ever composed.

Where? Like many composers of the time, Schubert is associated with Vienna. Unlike others who moved to the city, Schubert was born there and spent his entire life in Austria.



Activity

Listen to Schubert's *Impromptu No.2* (the chord progression is not dissimilar to the song *Fly Me to the Moon*). Which musical features make this piece more Romantic than Classical?



The concert pianist

Schubert's music is drenched in melody. A closer look at his piano sonatas reveals a highly individual solution to the conundrum of sounding song-like and spontaneous while still fitting with the blueprint of sonata form. Some feel that Schubert's harmonic writing lacked the drama, intensity and emotional depth of his contemporaries, but this seems hard to reconcile with his ingenious interplay of major and minor tonality. Schubert's final three sonatas reveal a composer at the very top of his game: his mastery of cyclical writing partly mirrors Beethoven's, with themes and harmonies cleverly reappearing in subsequent movements, giving a feeling of compactness to these large-scale works. A superb example of 'metamorphosis' (thematic transformation) comes in Schubert's *Wanderer Fantasy* of 1822. Aside from being a technical tour de force for any pianist, the *Wanderer* is a splendid example of how to rework familiar motifs with endless inventiveness.

It may help the pianist to think in terms of being both singer and accompanist at the same time: I find it helpful to imagine words attached to Schubert's piano melodies. Among the many challenges associated with playing this music on the modern piano are:

- *stamina* – Schubert's longer pieces can quickly drain our resources,
- *tone* – often more fruitfully conceived as coming from the wrist than from the fingers,
- *tempo* – we should generally aim to keep one speed for each movement, even when the mood alters and
- *expression* – often most effective while keeping the music gently 'singing' and/or 'dancing'.

Played too slowly, Schubert's music soon loses its song-like charm, so bear in mind the lighter touch of Schubert's instrument, which would have made for an easier movement around the keyboard. Give full value to rests and pauses, but phrasing can still be elastic and harmonies given time to register clearly. Where possible, relate each recurrence of material to where it was first heard, and make the most of special *pp* moments which can seem to appear magically as if from another universe. Bass lines need the utmost care in Schubert's piano writing, as does pedalling, which is often best applied sparingly to preserve the textures. Above all, keep Schubert's music moving forwards.

21

5 2 4 4 3

f *p*

25

4 3 3 1 3 1

Ped.

29

p 3 2 3 5 4 2 3 1 2 3

33

2 5 2 3 3 2 4 2

fp *fp*

37

pp

5

41

2 3 1 3 2

pp

Ped.