

# Juilliard

## **Practice Guide** **Ecossaise in G Major, WoO. 23** Ludwig van Beethoven

The ecossaise was a popular social dance during the 18th and 19th centuries. Beethoven originally composed his Ecossaise in G Major for wind band, but the score was lost after the performance. One of the performers remembered the melody after Beethoven's death and gave it to Carl Czerny (a former student of Beethoven and composer of many piano études), who created the arrangement for piano we use today.

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# Ecossaise

Ludwig van Beethoven  
WoO 23

Allegro

Measures 1-4 of the Ecossaise. The piece is in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first measure starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment of chords.

End of First Half

Measures 5-8 of the Ecossaise. Measure 5 is marked with a '5' above the staff. The melodic line continues with eighth notes and rests. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Measures 9-12 of the Ecossaise. Measure 9 begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The right hand has a more active melodic line with sixteenth notes, and the left hand continues with a rhythmic accompaniment.

Measures 13-16 of the Ecossaise. Measure 13 starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth notes and rests, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

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## Articulation and Phrasing

- Using the techniques Michael discusses in the Module 2 Instructional Video, discover the best fingering decisions for the Ecosaise and write them in the score. Do this by playing each hand separately. Try different fingering possibilities until you find the most economical option. Notice opportunities that allow you to keep the fingering consistent: when the hand can stay in one position, when notes are repeated, or when repeated gestures enable sequential fingering.
- Once you find satisfactory fingerings, play each hand individually, while focusing on the musical phrasing. Try different phrasing and articulations, and mark the ideal option in the score.
- Like many classical composers, Beethoven composed this work in 4-bar phrases. Try phrasing these four bars together, making sure that there is an uninterrupted melodic line. Musically, which phrases seem to pose a question (known as an antecedent phrase) and which seem to pose an answer (known as a consequent phrase) or resolution?
- Looking at both hands, think about how the two voices relate to one another. Play through every 4-bar phrase slowly, playing hands together, taking care to maintain your fingerings. Decide on a final articulation and phrasing for yourself after hearing both hands together.
- After listening to Brian Zeger's instruction in Module 2 on how the Italian language impacted composers of the Classical era, look back on your phrasing and articulation markings for each hand. Make observations based on your new knowledge!

## Dynamic Contrast

- Look at each 4-bar phrase again, now from the perspective of dynamic contrast. Does each phrase go up or down? Apply the principle Michael discusses (going up = get louder, going down = get softer). Are there exceptions? Also identify the significant places of tension and resolution that Brian Zeger discusses in the Expert Insights video.
- Think about extreme changes in dynamic, such as going from piano in m. 1 to forte in m. 9. Do you want these changes to happen suddenly, or might you prepare them with a crescendo or decrescendo? Mark these in the score.
- Identify any points at which the left hand takes on a more important role than the right hand in this Ecosaise. At these moments, the left hand may need to be louder than the right hand. Mark these moments in the score. Use ghosting to help you achieve the desired balance between the hands.
- Are there any fingerings that now feel uncomfortable when applying the dynamics? Make sure your hands are always comfortable and that your fingering allows you to have a flexible wrist and relaxed arm.
- Is there a climax in the piece that can be brought out with dynamic contrast, as demonstrated in the Tom Cabaniss Expert Insights video in Module 3? As you practice, keep Michael's demonstration from the video in mind. Work on creating dynamic contrast by differing your speed of attack on the key.

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## Rhythm, Tempo, and Passagework

- Practice the piece with the metronome providing a click on every quarter note beat. Play the piece at a slow, medium, and fast tempo. Then, practice the piece with a click on every half note beat at a comfortable speed until you've reached the performance tempo.
- Of great importance to the musical form Ecosaise (Scottish Dance) is its musical rhythm! The unique **syncopation** of mm. 2, 7, 13, 14 all require some sort of emphasis on the quarter-note of the right hand in order to bring out the dance rhythm. Try exaggerating this by placing an accent on that note.
- Apply rhythmic drills to the piece by changing the written rhythms of each measure. Start by using the short-long and the long-short pattern you learned from the course.
- After learning from Rachel Straus in the Module 4 Experts Insights video about how dancers must achieve different rhythms in different parts of their bodies simultaneously, look for instances where you are playing different subdivisions in each hand. Analyze how independent or dependent your hands feel at any given point in your performance.

## Pedaling

- Sing the melody to yourself, paying close attention to which notes you emphasize and to which notes you provide a lighter texture. Use the pedal to help you convey the difference between those textures and gestures. Keep in mind that pedaling can change articulation, dynamics, and color!
- After watching Nico Namoradze's discussion about the history of the instrument in the Module 5 Expert Insights video, has your perspective on your pedaling decisions changed? Go back and edit your pedal markings as needed to achieve a sound closer to what Beethoven had in mind when he wrote the piece.