

A Kalmus Classic Edition

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HANDEL

TWELVE EASY PIECES

Edited by
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FOR PIANO

K 09846



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PREFACE

The pieces in the series presented in this volume, are selected from the second and third parts of Handel's collected pianoforte-works, published for the German Handel Society by Breitkopf and Härtel, of Leipzig, in 1859; and, to the best of our knowledge, they have not hitherto been made accessible to the general public in a separate form.

The innumerable errors which appeared in the oldest editions, published at Amsterdam in 1723, and at London in 1733, during the lifetime of the composer, but without his sanction, remained uncorrected in the later Leipzig and London publications. To the present critical revision of these pieces, and careful exclusion of all errors, we do not think anyone can possibly be found to object.

As regards the artistic merits of those we have selected, a variety of opinions will doubtless be expressed, and, for our own part, we at once admit that we consider their value chiefly relative; but the Master's finer and greater pianoforte-works present difficulties of execution quite beyond the instructive aim of this series, which is intended less for improvement of solo-pianists than for that of amateurs and those who are studying other instrumental or vocal music, to enable them to add to their theoretical knowledge, and to perfect themselves in the various steps leading up to technical finish in pianoforte-playing; at least, sufficient for all the exigencies of accompaniment-playing.

The materials in pianoforte-literature, suitable for instruction in this particular direction, are by no means abundant.

The principal elementary pieces for practice, such, for example, as Clementi's Sonatas, Op. 36, are intended for very young beginners. J.S. Bach's "Inventions", even the two-part Inventions, and the yet more advanced Sonatas by his son, Emanuel, or the still later compositions of Haydn and Mozart, require not only well-practised fingers, but a considerable amount of matured study and discrimination to master their difficulties of execution.

We trust, therefore, that this small selection from Handel's works may serve to fill up the hiatus between the two extremes, and thus prove a welcome contribution.

It is to Handel's music, in particular, that we look for the attainment of our object, its simple purity, natural power, and essentially sound construction being most fitted to inculcate habits of strict attention to time and accuracy of rhythm in the musical student. It is the lack of

these qualities, in many singers and instrumentalists of the present day, which forms the chief obstacle to their attainment of correct and finished execution.

Although a fine and intellectual interpretation depends mainly upon correct execution, the freedom of tempo inherent in such an interpretation can flow only from a most highly developed rhythmical intelligence; which latter can be acquired-even to the end of reacting against its own stringency-solely through an unwavering observance of strict time.

The present pieces would appear to provide excellent material for the development of the above-mentioned characteristics, more especially because their grammatical and rhetorical accents (whether in accordance or opposition) are so easily discernible.

With regard to the copiousness of the fingering of these pieces, and the indications for the different dynamic gradations, we have only to remark that the latter need not be regarded in the first practice. The parts for the right and left hands must at first be practised by each, separately, in the slowest tempo, without any variation of force, and with careful attention to the minutest rhythmic subdivisions in every measure (the long and short notes); at the same time, the different qualities of touch indicated by the terms *legato*, *non legato*, *staccato legato*, *staccato*, must be scrupulously taken account of. For the object of the fingering, as marked, will be understood only by noting its connection with each particular quality of touch indicated, and with reference to the details of the musical phrasing.

Just as the first mechanical practice in execution, particularly that of the scales, tends to develop the power and agility, not only of both hands, but of each individual finger, so does the fingering of a piece, when intended to produce an expressive rendering, place each individual finger in readiness of every phrase and passage. "*Gavotta con variaziono*," No. XI, will, we think, best illustrate the correctness of this statement.

Do not let it be imagined that we forbid any logical deviation from any of our printed marks of expression. It is only against those dogmas of the old school, telling us that the true "classical" rendering of the beautiful compositions of a Handel or a Bach consists in a spiritless hammering-out of the notes like the hammerings at a blacksmith's forge, that we would warn our readers; for these dogmas are founded, upon the historical fact that the primitive construction of the pianoforte of the 17th cen-

tury rendered it incapable of producing anything but a hard, monotonous succession of sounds without any of our modern instruments afford. On the other hand, a too affected, modernized conception would be quite as distasteful to us.

SPECIAL REMARKS

I. Corrente (French "Courante"). A quick and lively form of dance-music of the olden time, in $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{3}{2}$ time, generally commencing on the unaccented note of a measure, as shown in No. XII, p. 23, which also serves to illustrate the manner in which repeated divisions are connected with each other. In Joh. Sebastian Bach's Suites, the "Courante" is of a somewhat serious character, and, in its concluding measure, changes from $\frac{3}{4}$ (or $\frac{3}{2}$) to $\frac{4}{4}$ (or $\frac{4}{2}$) time.

II and III. Minuetto (French "Menuet", from "menu", small; "pas menus", short steps). The first piece preserves its original solemn style; the second approaches the lively and popular character of the Haydn Minuets.

V. Sarabanda, An ancient form of Spanish dance-music, in slower movement and of a very serious (often melancholy) character, in $\frac{3}{2}$ or sometimes in $\frac{4}{4}$ time. Introduced into Paris from Spain by a Spanish dancer of the name of Sarabanda, at the time of Richelieu (17th century). The "Variations" with which it concludes would have been styled (by Bach, for instance) "Doubles", the term "Variation" having been afterwards applied to an artform undeveloped in Handel's time.

VI. Giga (French "Gigue"). Another species of dance-music usually in compound triple time, exhibiting two principal styles—the English (or French), and the Italian (or Spanish); the former being of a somewhat lively, and the latter of a serious, character; this being an example of the first style. The title is taken from that of an ancient Italian stringed instrument called "Giga", nearly related to the German "Geige" (fiddle).

VII. Sonata. This was originally called "Fantasia". Since, however, Philip Emanuel Bach and Mozart have attached a more appropriate meaning to that word, we have given the title "Sonata" as being more expressive of its particular form ("Sonata", and *instrumental* piece, in contradistinction to "Cantata, a *vocal* composition).

VIII. Gavotta. A form of dance-music of French origin ("Gavotte"), a peasants' dance of the "pays du Cap" in the south of France; generally in alla breve ($\frac{2}{2}$) time. This is, next to the "Gigue", the liveliest of the old dance-melodies.

IX. This piece, in the original editions, has simply the word "Presto" for its heading.

X. Allemande. A form of dance-music of German origin, always played "Moderato", and set in common time.

Dr. Hans Von Bulow.

Corrente

Allegro. (♩ = 138)

1.

The musical score for 'Corrente' is written for piano and bass. It begins with a tempo marking of 'Allegro' and a metronome indication of 138 beats per minute. The piece is in 3/4 time and the key of B-flat major. The score is divided into five systems. The first system starts with a forte (f) dynamic in the bass and a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic in the treble. The second system includes a piano (p) dynamic and a 'ten.' (tension) marking. The third system features a piano (p) dynamic and a 'cresc.' (crescendo) marking. The fourth system includes a piano (p) dynamic and a 'ten.' (tension) marking. The fifth system ends with a 'Fine' marking and a repeat sign. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and fingerings.

*)The short horizontal line—placed over a note signifies that it is to be sustained to its full duration; yet without being slurred on to the next note. The duration of a sound on the Piano depends less on the holding down of the finger after striking than on the mode of striking, or preparation therefor (the raising of the finger beforehand). A note marked with the horizontal line should, therefore, be played somewhat “*marcato*”, not so much so, however, as one marked >, or, still more emphatically, Λ.