

Craig Ogden Workshop: November 2012 – Players performance notes

Dave Pugh – Villa-Lobos Prelude No.3.

- Dave produces very good sound/ dynamic contrast. Exploit dynamics and expression marks on the score to convey what **you** want to say with the music.
- Show more awareness of rhythmic meter during execution of major 7th & dominant 7th arpeggios.
- Do not compromise meter during 5-note chord strokes – ie maintain meter (less 'allargando').
- Note right hand position/ angle during chord playing – make more use of thumb strokes instead of utilising thumb/ finger-based chord playing. Make use of timbral changes (sul tasto to ponticello).

Craig demonstrates passages from Fernando Sor's 'Gran Solo' and R. Rodney-Bennett's 'Five Impromptu's as examples where chord meter accuracy is vital to the flow of the music.

- It's useful to write annotations about passages/ phrases etc on your practice score-copy.

Alex Kilpatrick – Agustin Barrios: waltz Op.8 No.4

- Aim for your best performance on the day.
- Allow some room for error in order to help relaxation.
- Make a decision about where emphasis (voicing-wise) is required for any given phrase. Ie find the 'region of interest' ... which voice matters most ... in order for this piece: melody/ bass/ accompaniment.
- Right hand technique ultimately defines your dynamic range.
- Craig demonstrates measure 13 in the Waltz
- Alex' i finger is the weak point and requires some work to achieve success with this piece.
- Right hand wrist is seated to flat against the strings (palm-wise). Bring elbow forward toward the lower bout which will facilitate arching of the wrist.
- Right hand summary: Straighten forearm and arch the wrist. Index finger requires more movement/ motion – it currently pulls too short. A flat wrist promotes quiet playing and usually means the thumb plays more flesh strokes - instead of nail.
- Left hand: thumb is too high and visible over the neck. Thumb should rest on the flesh pad and never the leading edge.
- Tension in body manifested in rocking of heels on the floor. Your body should be as 'grounded' as possible.

Chris Birtles – J.S.Bach: Prelude in E (BWV 1006)

This prelude was competently played.

- As with all non-guitar compositions, explore the many fingering options.
- Measure 109 has a large left-hand stretch. Formally the music is starting a new section from this point so keep bass (F sharp) short to detach hand (from barre) in order to execute the stretch.
- Add slurs liberally to improve forward momentum and smoothness. Practice the piece at slow tempo in order to take in aurally what is happening as the piece progresses. Study the musical form of the piece.
- Visualise the left hand often – do not rely on auto-pilot.
- During practice, imagine you are in the performance situation of ‘live stage’ surroundings.
- The dynamics of this performance were musically ‘flat’ so improve this area.
- Measure 92 – crescendo point in the score.
- Measure 98 – apply rubato.

- Mm 108- 109 – formal change on F sharp minor back to E major – suggest low dynamic at this point (piano).
- Measure 118 drives music toward the end (alla CODA).
- Ornamentation trill on measure 129 B dominant: Craig’s right-hand cross-string fingering of notes G sharp and F sharp: *amip*

Nicole Nijssen – M.D.Pujol: Rockario

- Opening *ff*: suggest trying thumb reverse side of nail - semiquavers back & forth with both sides of thumb nail.
- Use gentle rest stroke to enhance melody.
- Measure 6: cut duration of chord to shorter length.
- Measure 8: use rest stroke for ‘E’ melody notes.
- Measure 16: don’t play flat with right hand ‘a’ finger.
- Define ‘region of interest’ in the harmony (ie melody as primary interest).

Craig demonstrates ‘ambulance effect’ in Tarrega’s ‘Capricho Arabe’.

- Purpose of above: to reduce the dynamic level of the accompaniment harmony.
- Measure 25: suggest adding vibrato to make the melody more ‘sostenuto’.

- Performance has issues concerning interpretation of 'meter'. Craig stresses the importance of counting the beats per bar so that notes/ chords are not overly robbed of time – important to distinguish this from Rubato **which it is not**.
- Measure 48: avoid barre chords – keep on fingertips.
- Craig suggests practising scales with random alternation of right hand rest/ free stroke.

John Gavin/ John McGaw – Mark Houghton: Prelude No.3

- Both players have same dynamics for the piece. Change this based on region of interest – melody first, bass second and accompaniment material last. Analysis of music is needed for this.
- Time signature – and therefore meter/ pulse - governs tempo choice. Duet playing requires that both players listen to each other.
- Awareness of upbeat in accompaniment part is crucial.
- Study the length of phrases and apply dynamics in an arc-like fashion.
- What you think before you play dictates the result – tone quality.
- Measure 3: John-G part – C natural instead of C sharp.
- Hold accompaniment bass G natural to full duration.
- Measure 25: John-G check right hand nail execution on string – should be flat while playing melody.
- Both duo players need to share a common feel for meter 'click track'. Use 1e and a 2e (3/4).

Steve Glover: W.Walton: Bagatelle No.3

- The piece requires a little more than 'piano' at the outset.
- Measure 9: counting 8th notes will help here.
- Try playing right hand of this piece without the left hand:-

Craig demonstrates with Allegro by Bach (BWV 998)

- Don't rely on recordings for interpretation – all information required is included in the composer's published score.
- The reading of demisemiquaver passages (eg mm.9/ 11-13) needs correcting where they occur in the piece.
- Measure 50: Steve executes a correct reading of this measure.
- Rubato is variable pulse, or sway.