



Technical gym

This piece is entirely based on broken chords and scales, moving quickly through hand position changes. Choreograph these by playing them as chords first, and mark in your fingerings. Try to practise all the possible arpeggio patterns regularly:

- * All the major and minor keys in root position, first and second inversions.
- * Broken chords in triads (C E G, E G C, etc.)
- * Broken chords in full, with the tonic at the top and bottom (C E G C, E G C E, etc.)
- * Diminished 7ths and dominant 7ths in root position and inversions.

Little Fantasy

C.P.E. Bach
(1714–1788)

Allegro assai

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Concert pianist

For ascending arpeggios and broken chords, the thumb should guide the hand into each new position as early as possible, with a minimum of up/down wrist motion or circular elbow movement to avoid unwanted bumps. Enjoy how it feels to cover each new triad fractionally ahead of actually playing the notes. Practising triads as a succession of block chords can be useful, too. Obviously broken chords use the thumb more frequently than arpeggios, so keeping a light, curved hand close to the keys will help you sound even, nimble and controlled.

2

The Classical period (1750–1820)

Musical architecture and harmony



The concert pianist

Interpretation

The leather hammers and slick action of the Viennese fortepiano lent itself to nimble passages and decorative articulation. The treble has been likened to a reed, though a device called a moderator could add a wonderful harp-like contrast. The English pianoforte of the same period in contrast had an *una corda* pedal to the left, a sustain to the right, and greater string tension (though the frame was still wooden) giving a bigger, richer sound. These factors go some way to explaining the contrast of, say, Clementi or Beethoven (pianoforte) and Mozart (fortepiano). Beethoven reveals his fondness for left-hand tremolo and thick chords, emphasis on weak beats and crescendos which drop suddenly. Mozart preferred leaner accompaniments and shimmering running passages and sequences: clarity of texture is paramount.

Touch and articulation

The rapid note decay characteristic of early Viennese and English instruments suggests the need to play slower pieces a little more quickly. We can also make more of 'sighs' and other articulation-based contrasts. The so-called 'repetition action' that appeared by the end of the period gave greater flexibility for touch and dexterity.

Phrasing

A compact, symmetrical approach will often work well in Mozart, whereas it may help us to think in larger sweeps when playing Beethoven or Schubert. Expression within phrasing should never be a bolt-on or afterthought: taper off the ends of lines, especially lyrical ones, to achieve a contoured, elegant effect.

Rhythm and metre

Syncopation is indispensable in Classical music. The rhythmic inflections we take for granted in jazz – delaying a note, 'bouncing' off a bass line or accentuating a weaker note and 'sitting back' on the beat are all foreshadowed in this period, though of course at a more moderate level. Rubato can introduce flexibility to a Classical melody but a 'less is more' approach will serve you well.

Tone production

Mozart's left-hand parts sometimes include dense low triads that can sound muddy on a modern piano. To compensate, 'voice' a top or bottom note in such chords, or arpeggiate them. We can call upon our instrument's richer tenor region for certain passages, but the thinner tone of Classical instruments is worth keeping in mind, else we paint these delicate strands of music with too broad a brush.

Use of pedals

An impressive array of pedals existed on fortepianos; sadly, today we no longer celebrate such beautiful effects. Instead we must rely on our ears to decide what sounds effective with our two pedals. The sustain pedal today can hold its bass notes for infinitely longer than players of the day would have been accustomed.

Listen to these works of different genres from the Classical period.

- **Orchestral** Symphony No.22, 'The Philosopher', by Joseph Haydn
- **Chamber or solo** Trio in E \flat KV498, 'Kegelstatt' (for piano, viola and clarinet) by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
- **Choral** Haydn's *The Heavens are Telling*, from 'The Creation'

Repertoire from the period recommended for performance or study:

- *Sixty Pieces for Aspiring Players Book 2* by Daniel Gottlob Türk
- Sonatinas by Friedrich Kuhlau, Georg Benda or Anton Diabelli

72

p *cresc.* *p* *cresc.* *sf* *p* *sf*

77

83

cresc. *ff*

88

dim. *cresc.*

93

dim. *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.*

98

rit. *cresc.*

* Brackets indicate suggestion to split large chords in two for smaller hands.