

***CALENDAR COLLECTION AND IN MY LUNCHBOX: A PEDAGOGICAL ANALYSIS***  
**OF TWO PIANO WORKS BY JUDITH LANG ZAIMONT**

by

SOO JUNG JEON

(Under the Direction of Martha Thomas and Peter Jutras)

**ABSTRACT**

This study presents a pedagogical analysis of two of Judith Lang Zaimont's works, *Calendar Collection* (1976) and *In My Lunchbox* (2003). The study outlines technical challenges found in these works and offers teaching suggestions. In doing so, the author hopes to provide intermediate and advanced level piano students and their teachers with more exposure to contemporary styles.

*Calendar Collection* (1976) and *In My Lunchbox* (2003), by Judith Lang Zaimont (b. 1945), both allow students to explore modern writing styles without the physical or aesthetic obstacles commonly found in contemporary piano works. Moreover, Zaimont's descriptive music encourages students to use their imaginations in performance. Her life and musical background are discussed in this dissertation, along with an examination of each movement of these two pedagogical compositions. Basic information about each piece is presented, along with an analysis of the primary challenges. Pedagogical suggestions are offered for each work to aid with the teaching process. The author hopes that this study will inspire students and teachers to examine and employ contemporary works by Zaimont and other composers.

INDEX WORDS: Piano pedagogy, Piano repertoire, Contemporary music, Modern  
American music, Judith Lang Zaimont, *Calendar Collection*, *In My  
Lunchbox*, Analysis, Teaching suggestions

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, Myungsook and Gion Jeon, who introduced me to music. Their love and support have led me to where I am and have made everything possible.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   | Page |
|---|------|
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....   | v    |
| CHAPTER   |      |
| 1 INTRODUCTION .....  | 1    |
| Biography.....  | 2    |
| Compositions .....  | 4    |
| Related Literature.....                                       | 6    |
| Rationale .....   | 8    |
| Methodology .....   | 8    |
| 2 CALENDAR COLLECTION: 12 PRELUDES FOR THE DEVELOPING PIANIST | 10   |
| January: Fanfare for the Year .....                           | 12   |
| February: The Ice Melts Slowly, Slowly .....                  | 17   |
| March: The Winds Depart .....                                 | 22   |
| April: Recitative - The First Bird-song .....                 | 30   |
| May: The May-fly .....  | 36   |
| June: A Walking 'Round Song .....                             | 44   |
| July: Holiday .....   | 47   |
| August: Anthem .....  | 50   |
| September: The Winds Arise .....                              | 54   |



|  |     |
|--|-----|
| October: Autumn Thoughts .....                           | 61  |
| November: Secret Thunder .....                           | 64  |
| December: Sleighride.....                                | 67  |
| 3 IN MY LUNCHBOX: SUITE FOR THE DEVELOPING PIANIST ..... | 74  |
| Swimming Tuna (Arabesque) .....                          | 75  |
| Celery Stalks .....                                      | 81  |
| The Banana Song (Whistlin' Tune) .....                   | 86  |
| Mandarin Orange .....                                    | 92  |
| Dessert — Sugar RUSH (Toccata) .....                     | 96  |
| 4 CONCLUSION.....  | 101 |
| REFERENCES .....   | 104 |

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to present a pedagogical analysis of two of Judith Lang Zaimont's works: *Calendar Collection* (1976) and *In My Lunchbox* (2003). This study will outline technical challenges found in these works and offer teaching suggestions. In doing so, the author hopes to provide intermediate and advanced level piano students and their teachers with more exposure to contemporary styles. The composer has designated both of these works as pedagogical. She has stated that "it is important to introduce music of the present era to students as they are developing ...,"<sup>1</sup> and claims these two sets as representative of her works. Teachers frequently look to new repertoire to help their students branch out beyond commonly heard or frequently taught pieces. However, contemporary music can sound relatively unappealing to younger students unfamiliar with modern musical language. Thus, introducing contemporary music is often postponed until later phases of student learning.

Teachers need not wait until students reach advanced levels, however, in order to present Zaimont's *In My Lunchbox* and *Calendar Collection*, as works that are twentieth- and twenty-first-century repertoire. Nor need teachers wait until students have grown physically and developed larger hands and greater strength, all of which are frequently a necessity in playing modern repertoire. Both of these Zaimont sets expose students to modern writing styles without these obstacles. In addition, the individual pieces in the sets are relatively short, making them

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<sup>1</sup> Katharine Boyes, "The Months of the Year Portrayed in Piano Works by Fanny Hensel, Charles-Valentin Alkan, Peter Tchaikovsky, and Judith Lang Zaimont," (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 1997), 333.

more approachable. Those of *In My Lunchbox* are thirty-three to 120 measures, and the individual pieces in *Calendar Collection* are thirteen to forty-seven measures.

This document provides a biographical sketch of Zaimont, an overview of her works, and a brief description and pedagogical analysis of *In My Lunchbox* and *Calendar Collection*.

### **Biography**

Judith Lang Zaimont was born in 1945 into a musical family in Memphis, Tennessee. Shortly thereafter the family moved to Queens, New York, where she was raised. Along with her sister, Doris, Zaimont began piano lessons at age five with their mother, Bertha F. Lang. Zaimont describes her mother as the musical root of the family.<sup>2</sup> Bertha Lang was a skilled pianist, voice teacher, and composer. She occasionally composed popular songs for the local Cole Porter variety show, and wrote musical shows for the schools where she taught.<sup>3</sup>

At age twelve, Zaimont received a scholarship to attend the Juilliard Preparatory School, where she studied piano with Rosina Lhévinne and her associate, Leland Thompson. She also studied theory and duo-piano with Ann Hull. Zaimont and her sister (a year younger) teamed up as a duo and toured the United States, making recordings and appearing on television shows and in concerts. They performed both standard and new repertoire, including pieces written for them and a few arrangements by Zaimont.<sup>4</sup>

Mrs. Lang became aware of Zaimont's creative talent when her eleven-year old daughter wrote two compositions for piano,<sup>5</sup> and was very supportive of her daughter's work. Zaimont's

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<sup>2</sup> Jane Weiner LePage, *Women Composers, Conductors, and Musicians of the Twentieth-Century: Selected Biography*, Vol. II. (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1983), 322.

<sup>3</sup> LePage, 322.

<sup>4</sup> Judith Lang Zaimont, "Foundational Biographical Notes," [http://www.jzaimont.com/biography\\_old.html](http://www.jzaimont.com/biography_old.html) (accessed March 24, 2014).

<sup>5</sup> LePage, 323.

compositions soon began winning competitions, including the first prize in the National Federation of Music Clubs, which she won twice at ages twelve and fourteen.

In 1962, Zaimont entered Queens College of the City University of New York and studied composition with Hugo Weisgall. She studied twentieth-century theory privately with Leo Kraft, as this subject was not offered by Queens College at that time. During her college years, she continued winning prizes for her original works, including a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, which led to her attendance at Columbia University's graduate school. There she earned a Master's degree in composition, studying with Otto Luening and Jack Beeson. In 1967, Zaimont married artist Gary Zaimont, and a year later she graduated from Columbia University. In 1971, she spent a year in Paris, where she studied orchestration with André Jolivet on a Debussy Fellowship. Zaimont also won a MacDowell Fellowship and went to the MacDowell Colony in 1971, where she wrote her piano concerto.

Zaimont went on to receive the Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship in 1983 and 1984 and the National League of American Pen Women Fellowship in 1988. She was the honored composer at the Eleventh Van Cliburn International Competition in 2001, where her composition, *Impronta Digitale*, was selected and performed by both gold medalists. Zaimont won the 2003-04 Aaron Copland Award and was awarded an Artist Fellowship in Music Composition by Bush Foundation in 2005.<sup>6</sup>

After earning her degrees, Zaimont began her teaching career, during which she continued her pursuits as a performer and composer. At this time, she wrote on the subject of music and continued to write articles and books throughout her career. Zaimont held appointments on the music faculties of New York City Community College (1969-1971),

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<sup>6</sup> Judith Lang Zaimont, "Awards & Prizes," [http://www.jzaimont.com/awards\\_prizes.html](http://www.jzaimont.com/awards_prizes.html) (accessed May 10, 2014).

Queens College (1972-1977), and Peabody Conservatory (1980-1987). She also held positions as chair of the Music Department at Adelphi University (1988-1991), professor of composition and chair of Theory and Composition at the University of Minnesota (1992-2002), as well as Division Chair and Scholar in the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota (2002-2005). Zaimont was formally given the title of professor of Composition Emeritus at the University of Minnesota.<sup>7</sup>

Beginning with her first publication, *Contemporary Concert Music by Women* (1981),<sup>8</sup> Zaimont was actively involved in writing on musical subjects. For her three-volume book series, *The Musical Woman: An International Perspective*,<sup>9</sup> she received a research grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for development of interpretive research in 1989. In addition, in 1993 she won the Pauline Alderman First Prize, an international musicology award for content and editing. Her *Twentieth-Century Music for the Developing Pianist: A Graded and Annotated List* was included in *Teaching Piano* in 1981,<sup>10</sup> and has been recognized in the field as a standard teaching resource.<sup>11</sup>

## Compositions

Zaimont has composed numerous works for various instrumentations and in various genres, including solo, chamber, and orchestral pieces. Before 1984, vocal music formed a large part of her catalogue, likely due to the influence of her teachers, Weisgall and Beeson, both of

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<sup>7</sup> Judith Lang Zaimont, Email interview, May 12, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> Judith Lang Zaimont, and Karen McNerney Famera, *Contemporary Concert Music by Women: A Directory of the Composers and Their Works* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981).

<sup>9</sup> Judith Lang Zaimont, Catherine Overtauser, and Jane Gottlieb, eds, *The Musical Woman: An International Perspective I-III* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984-1985).

<sup>10</sup> Judith Lang Zaimont, "Twentieth-Century Music for the Developing Pianist: A Graded and Annotated List." in *Teaching Piano*, ed. Denes Agay (New York: Yorktown Music Press, 1981). Vol. II: 489-548.

<sup>11</sup> Diane Peacock Jezic, *Women Composers: The Lost Tradition Found*. (New York, NY: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1994), 216.

whom focused on writing music for voice.<sup>12</sup> After her initial concentration on vocal music, she focused more on instrumental music. Zaimont's piano-centered background also allowed her to create a great deal of excellent keyboard music. She has produced more than one hundred works, many of which were commissions that have received notable awards and prizes. Her compositions have been performed, published, and recorded worldwide.<sup>13</sup>

Although often referred to as a "Romantic Modernist,"<sup>14</sup> Zaimont considers herself a "Lyric Modernist."<sup>15</sup> Her compositional style shows expressive strength and rhythmic vitality in a lyrical style.<sup>16</sup> She employs tonal harmony throughout, and the texture is thick, usually with five- or six-note chords.<sup>17</sup>

Zaimont's output of solo piano pieces includes a range of works, from those for developing pianists to concert pieces suitable for professional performers. Currently, Zaimont's catalogue of piano music lists twenty-two works, most of them having earned awards, prizes, or honors. Many of the piano compositions were commissioned, and more than half have been recorded. Her most performed solo piano works include *A Calendar Set* (1972-1978), *Jupiter's Moons* (2000), and *Wizards – Three Magic Masters* (2003).<sup>18</sup>

Among her piano works, Zaimont has written four pedagogical works for developing pianists. The composer stipulated two of them, *Calendar Collection* (1976) and *In My Lunchbox* (2003), for developing pianists, whereas the other two, *Suite Impressions* (1994) and *Hitchin' - a*

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<sup>12</sup> LePage, 325.

<sup>13</sup> Zaimont, "Biographical Notes," [http://www.jzaimont.com/biography\\_old.html](http://www.jzaimont.com/biography_old.html) (accessed May 10, 2014).

<sup>14</sup> David DeBoor Canfield, "Step by Step, Stage by Stage: The Music of Judith Lang Zaimont," *Fanfare* 35, no. 1 (2011): 64.

<sup>15</sup> Sharon Llewellyn, "Amy Beach and Judith Lang Zaimont: A Comparative Study of Their Lives and Songs," (DMA diss., Arizona State University, 2008), 467.

<sup>16</sup> LePage, 327.

<sup>17</sup> Llewellyn, 461.

<sup>18</sup> Walter Simmons, "Zaimont: Piano Sonata. Calendar Collection: Spring, Summer, Autumn. Jupiter's Moons. Wizards. La Fin De Siècle. A Calendar Set. Cortège for Jack. Jazz Waltz. American City: Portrait of New York. Hitchin.' In My Lunchbox. Hesitation Rag. Reflective Rag. Judy's Rag. Serenade." *Fanfare* 36, no. 1 (September 2012): 421.

*travellin' groove* (2007), she did not. However, in an email interview, Zaimont listed both *Suite Impressions* and *Hitchin'- a travellin' groove* as part of her pedagogical catalogue.<sup>19</sup> Currently, she is working on *Keyboard Cousins*, another work designated for young pianists. She has specified that the degree of difficulty in her pedagogical works relies on the “resting attitude of the hands upon the keyboard,” or the “degree of independence for each hand.”<sup>20</sup> She has designated *In My Lunchbox*, along with *Keyboard Cousins*, as easier pieces, and she views *Suite Impressions* and *Hitchin'- a travellin' groove* as more challenging. *Calendar Collection* is the most difficult of Zaimont’s pedagogical compositions, as she has noted its technical requirements are harder than most of the Mozart Sonatas. In this study, I will focus on the pedagogical purposes and teaching practices in *Calendar Collection* and *In My Lunchbox*.

### Related Literature

Zaimont and her music are the subjects of seventeen dissertations, chapters in two books, and dozens of articles in professional journals. Two main biographical sources are chapters in Diane Peacock Jezic’s *Women Composer: The Lost Tradition Found*,<sup>21</sup> and in Jane Weiner LePage’s *Women Composers, Conductors, and Musicians of the Twentieth Century: Volume II*,<sup>22</sup> which also includes a list of her compositions.

Among the scholarly works on Zaimont compositions, three dissertations are related to this study. Sharon Llewellyn’s dissertation, “Amy Beach and Judith Lang Zaimont: A Comparative Study of Their Lives and Songs” discusses Zaimont’s biography, her musical style

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<sup>19</sup> Judith Lang Zaimont, Email interview, May 25, 2013.

<sup>20</sup> Judith Lang Zaimont, Email interview, May 3, 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Jezic, 211-222.

<sup>22</sup> LePage, 322-339.

and principles of composing, and includes an interview with her.<sup>23</sup> Katharine Boyes' dissertation, "The Months of the Year Portrayed in Piano Works by Fanny Hensel, Charles-Valentin Alkan, Peter Tchaikovsky, and Judith Lang Zaimont" provides an overview and analysis of *A Calendar Set* and *Calendar Collection*.<sup>24</sup> The author focuses her examination on musical elements, such as the structures, compositional features, and pitch class sets of each movement, but omits discussion of pedagogical aspects. Rebecca Pennington's dissertation, "Suite Talk: A Survey of Two Compositions by Judith Lang Zaimont" offers very brief pedagogical concerns of *In My Lunchbox* with occasional teaching suggestions for technical challenges.<sup>25</sup>

Several articles review Zaimont's music. "All-American Appeal" in *Piano & Keyboard Magazine* reviews *A Calendar Set* and *Calendar Collection*,<sup>26</sup> while "I Love A Parade" in *Clavier* focuses on "July" from *A Calendar Set*.<sup>27</sup> In "Composer Profile: Judith Lang Zaimont" from *Piano Today*, Zaimont writes about the motivation, process, and planning of her composition, *In My Lunchbox*.<sup>28</sup> Interviews with Zaimont have appeared in articles, including "Step by Step, Stage by Stage: The Music of Judith Lang Zaimont,"<sup>29</sup> and "A Conversation with Judith Lang Zaimont,"<sup>30</sup> "A Musician for All Seasons: Judith Lang Zaimont,"<sup>31</sup> "... And Judith Lang Zaimont,"<sup>32</sup> and "An Interview With Judith Lang Zaimont: The Dual Process of the Cliburn Competition."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Llewellyn.

<sup>24</sup> Boyes, 332-397.

<sup>25</sup> Pennington, Rebecca, "Suite Talk: A Survey of Two Compositions by Judith Lang Zaimont," (DMA diss., University of Kansas, 2007),

<sup>26</sup> Clinton Adams, "All-American appeal," *Piano & Keyboard*, no. 195 (November 1, 1998): 39-43.

<sup>27</sup> Judy Nelson, "I Love A Parade," *Clavier* 46, no. 6 (July/August 2007): 36-41.

<sup>28</sup> Judith Lang Zaimont, "Composer Profile: Judith Lang Zaimont," *Piano Today* 24 (Summer 2004): 10-11

<sup>29</sup> Canfield: 62-70.

<sup>30</sup> James Reel, "A Conversation with Judith Lang Zaimont," *Fanfare* 19 (May 1996): 30-32, 34, 36.

<sup>31</sup> Doris Jean Cranfill, "A Musician for All Seasons: Judith Lang Zaimont (Interview)," *Music Clubs Magazine* 82 (Autumn 2002): 15-16.

<sup>32</sup> J. Dunn, "... And Judith Lang Zaimont," *21st Century Music* 7 (January 2000): 13-22.

<sup>33</sup> Anne Carol Kilstofte, "An Interview With Judith Lang Zaimont: The Dual Process of the Cliburn Competition," *IAWM Journal: International Alliance for Women in Music* 7, no. 3 (June 2001): 1-7.



## **Rationale**

Although a number of these resources discuss Zaimont's background, compositional style, and musical thought, and a few provide a catalogue of her works, none has yet focused on the pedagogical aspects of *Calendar Collection* and *In My Lunchbox*. Because these works were written for developing students, more in-depth discussion would benefit teachers by proposing more effective ways to teach these works. Boyes' brief analysis of *Calendar Collection* offers only theoretical analysis in a discussion about styles and structures. And, because *In My Lunchbox* is a recent work composed in 2003, only brief reviews of this work and a recording have yet appeared. Although Pennington discusses pedagogical concerns of *In My Lunchbox*, solutions for overcoming the challenges are rarely suggested. This present study will provide compositional details of *Calendar Collection* and *In My Lunchbox*, discuss the pedagogical aspects of the pieces, and give practice suggestions.

## **Methodology**

After a brief background and description of *Calendar Collection* and *In My Lunchbox*, each individual movement will be analyzed with the basic musical elements presented first, followed by a pedagogical analysis. The basic musical elements include difficulty level, tempo marking, tonality, time signature, form, length (measures and duration), texture, range, and hand span. The difficulty level follows the guidelines as defined in Jane Magrath's "Reference Chart for Grading" (Figure 1).<sup>34</sup> The pedagogical analysis will include a discussion of the technical and musical challenges, along with teaching suggestions for each of these items. Zaimont's stated pedagogical purposes will be included for *In My Lunchbox*, as she offered them only in this set.

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<sup>34</sup> Jane Magrath, *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing, 1995), xi.

### **Reference Chart for Grading**

*Levels 1–10, Beginning to Early-Advanced Levels*

- Level 1 Bartók *Mikrokosmos*, Vol. 1
- Level 2 Türk *Pieces for Beginners*
- Level 3 Latour *Sonatinas*; Kabalevsky *Pieces for Young People*, Op. 39
- Level 4 Anna Magdalena Bach *Notebook*; Gurlitt *Album for the Young*, Op. 140; Tchaikovsky *Album for the Young*, Op. 39
- Level 5 Anna Magdalena Bach *Notebook*; Sonatinas by Attwood, Lynes; Menotti *Poemetti*
- Level 6 Clementi *Sonatinas*, Op. 36; Burgmüller *25 Progressive Pieces*, Op. 100
- Level 7 Kuhlau and Diabelli *Sonatinas*; Bach easier *Two-Part Inventions*; Bach *Little Preludes*; Dello Joio *Lyric Pieces for the Young*
- Level 8 Moderately difficult Bach *Two-Part Inventions*; Beethoven easier variations sets; Field *Nocturnes*; Schumann *Album Leaves*, Op. 124; Schubert *Waltzes*; Turina *Miniatures*
- Level 9 Easier Bach *Three-Part Inventions*; easiest Haydn Sonata movements; easiest Mendelssohn *Songs Without Words*; easiest Chopin *Mazurkas*
- Level 10 Bach *Three-Part Inventions*; easiest Chopin *Nocturnes*; Beethoven *Sonatas*, Op. 49, 79; Mozart *Sonata*, K. 283; Muczynski *Preludes*

Figure 1. Magrath's chart of representative piano repertoire for grading levels of difficulty

## CHAPTER 2

### CALENDAR COLLECTION: 12 PRELUDES FOR THE DEVELOPING PIANIST

Zaimont wrote *A Calendar Set* between 1972 and 1978. The work consists of twelve virtuosic character pieces representing each month of the year. It was reviewed as demonstrating “a sensitive, Romantic temperament with a mixture of dissonance and humor.”<sup>35</sup> While working on the set, Zaimont accepted the suggestion from her publisher to write an easier set of calendar pieces for pedagogical purposes. The result was *Calendar Collection* (1976), which, although less brilliant and technically challenging than *A Calendar Set*, has proven appealing to audiences and performers alike.<sup>36</sup> The first publication of *Calendar Collection* was subtitled *12 Preludes for the Developing Pianist* and it is this complete title that is included in Zaimont’s website. This collection was reprinted in 1996 without the subtitle.

Despite their different levels of difficulty, some similarities appear between *A Calendar Set* and *Calendar Collection*. Most obviously, Zaimont uses subtitles for the twelve months of the year in both works. Other similarities include that both “Februarys” use “ice” in their subtitles, the “Junes” are both written in A Major, and “Julys” are both written in flat keys. In addition, both “Julys” use perky rhythmic patterns, and both “Septembers” describe weather as unsettled and windy.

Zaimont composed the preludes of *A Calendar Set* and *Calendar Collection* out of the order in which they appear in their published versions. For *A Calendar Set*, she wrote the

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<sup>35</sup> Maurice Hinson, *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000), 826.

<sup>36</sup> Simmons, 423.

portraits during their corresponding months, even though she took several years to do so.<sup>37</sup> She completed this set by composing *January*, in 1978.

*Calendar Collection* was written over a shorter period of time due to a deadline in the contract with its initial publisher, Alfred Music. After Zaimont finished composing and submitted *Calendar Collection* to the publisher, she made some adjustments in the titles, for instance, switching the month “April” to “May.”<sup>38</sup> Initially, she used the same “brushed” hand motion figure for the right-hand in the month “April” in both *A Calendar Set* and *Calendar Collection*. Later, however, she decided on a “designed, unbalanced recitative” for the month of April, to express the change from winter to spring.<sup>39</sup> Zaimont observed that “the brushed RH figure is to me more cheerful, more upbeat (and quite Chopin-esque), and definitely belongs with a ‘Happy’ month like May.”<sup>40</sup> As a result, what was formerly “April” appears as “May” in *Calendar Collection*.

In *Calendar Collection*, Zaimont mapped out various textures, tempi, moods, and dynamics for each prelude. She wrote brief preparatory exercises for each prelude, focusing on one technical challenge found within the corresponding prelude. She also specified techniques to describe each month, including intensive trills and tremolos for “November” for the “secret thunder” (of the subtitle), and five-note clusters likely interpreted as a jingle-bell effect for “December.” The composer’s preparatory exercises for each movement cover primary techniques that require practice for flawless performance.

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<sup>37</sup> Boyes, 246.

<sup>38</sup> Boyes, 333.

<sup>39</sup> Zaimont, Email interview, May 12, 2014.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

## **“January: Fanfare for the Year”**

“January” is written with one distinctive idea that represents a type of fanfare in repeated units of two sixteenths, followed by longer note values meant to depict the celebration of the New Year. Precise and accurate placement of accents is essential for creating the mood of the fanfare. The overall *forte* dynamic level also describes this mood. Because the overall dynamic level is quite loud throughout, contrast between *forte* and *fortissimo* is crucial.

### ***Elements***

The prelude is equivalent to a difficulty of level 10 based on Magrath’s chart (See figure 1). The tempo indicates “Maestoso (quarter note = 84),” and the tonal center is F.<sup>41</sup> The meter displays irregular shifts between 4/4 and 6/4. It is in the form of AA<sup>1</sup>: A (mm. 1-6) – A<sup>1</sup> (mm. 7-end). The piece comprises thirteen measures with a performance time of approximately forty seconds. The texture contains imitative writing followed by a chordal fanfare. The overall range stays in the middle of the keyboard, and the octave is the largest interval appearing in one hand, with the interval of a sixth predominating.

### ***Technical and Musical Challenges***

Despite frequent meter changes, the presence of the quarter note throughout makes “January” accessible for students. However, the recurrence of accidentals on nearly every beat, and the management of subtle and gradual dynamic changes may need to be addressed and practiced. Finger changes on one note appear consistently in double grace notes and in sets of two sixteenths, with shifted accents that may require attention. The use of the pedal is necessary to achieve an appropriate *legato*, as indicated by the phrase markings in the score. Imitation between the hands in the beginning of both A and A<sup>1</sup> sections requires training to execute well.

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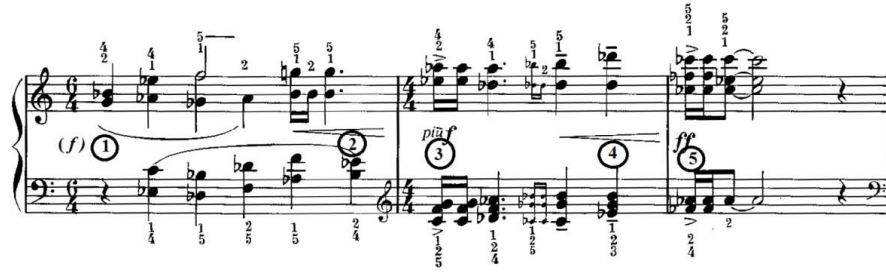
<sup>41</sup> Boyes, 336. Boyes identified two primary pitch class sets: 02457 and 01358.

## ***Teaching Suggestions***

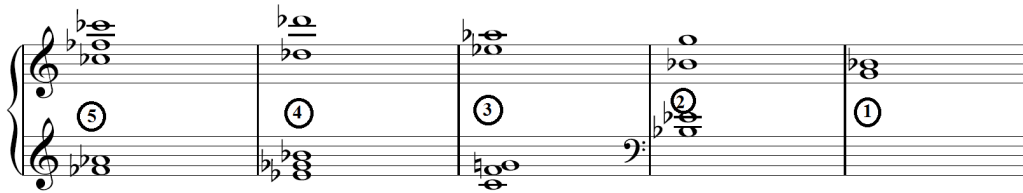
### *Dynamic changes*

The primary dynamic for the prelude is loud, as each section begins *forte*, with a *crescendo* towards the end of each section. Because the dynamic range is narrow, it is essential to keep the same *forte* level until Zaimont's score indicates a *crescendo*. Even for advanced students, it may be a challenge to produce a gradual change of dynamic. Tiered dynamics practice, using the numbering system described below, will assist in acquiring control over changing dynamics.

For "January," I would suggest using five numbering levels (Ex. 1). In order to achieve an effective *crescendo* from *forte* to *fortissimo*, it would be wise to work backwards and label the *fortissimo* with a level 5 dynamic and the *forte* at a level 1 (*forte* is the softest dynamic in this piece), so that the volume for level 1 might be defined. Thus, the student can determine what the loudest dynamic will be and can decrease the volume gradually until she reaches level 1, employing the chords shown in Example 2. Once the student can control gradual dynamic changes between these five dynamic levels, she can explore them in the opposite direction (from level 1–level 5.) Then, as the final step, the student can add the remaining notes to complete the exercise.



Example 1. “January,” mm. 4-6, with inserted dynamic levels



Example 2. Exercise for dynamic control

### *Finger numbers*

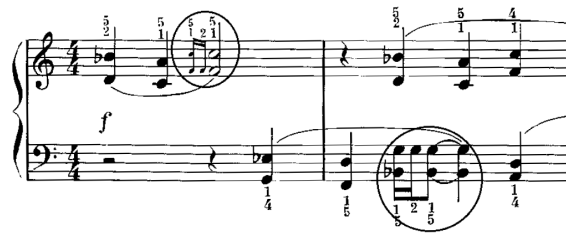
Switching fingers quickly on one note may prove challenging to students. See Example 3 below for Zaimont’s preparatory exercise for “January.” It would be effective to practice starting at a slow tempo, beginning with the metronome set at quarter note = 52, gradually moving to 60, 66, 76, and finally to 84, Zaimont’s own tempo marking for this prelude.



Example 3. “January,” Zaimont’s preparatory exercise

### *Accents*

In “January,” Zaimont constantly juxtaposes the figure of double grace notes with that of two sixteenth notes (Ex. 4), both of which can be practiced with her preparatory exercise. While they might sound similar, the grace notes can be interpreted as beginning before the beat and the two sixteenths on the beat, as Zaimont placed accents dissimilarly in her exercise.



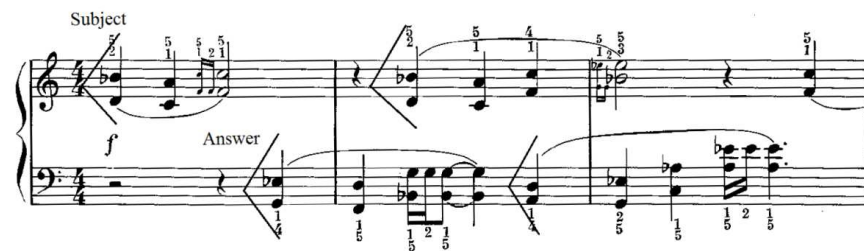
Example 4. “January,” mm. 1-2

### *Imitation*

In this prelude, the left hand imitates the right at a different pitch, with a slight modification (Ex. 5). Rather than continue with new material, the voice in the right-hand melody



outlines an extended version of the subject, over the answer in the left hand. In order to obtain a good result, students can learn to simplify the rhythm and the notes. For example, playing the highest notes only in each hand, leaving out the grace and sixteenth notes, allows students to recognize and execute the imitation with ease (Ex. 6). Before exploring the full texture, it might be profitable to attempt the intervals in each clef using both hands (Ex. 7). For this exercise, the two voices in the treble clef can be divided between the hands as well as the bass clef in the same manner.



Example 5. “January,” mm. 1-3, with indication of imitation



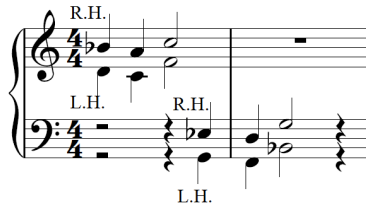
Example 6. Practice playing the highest notes only in each hand



Example 7-1. Subject played in both hands



Example 7-2. Answer played in both hands



Example 7-3. Beginning of subject and answer played in both hands

### **“February: The Ice Melts Slowly, Slowly”**

“February” describes the winter’s thaw using a very slow tempo without subdivided rhythms, as both hands move down in register gradually. Smooth phrasing is essential to portray the mood, as well as steadiness of pace.

## ***Elements***

The prelude is similar to a difficulty level 6. Even though this level is accessible to early intermediate students, this prelude might not be suitable for younger students with small hands because of the appearance of blocked 9th among otherwise mostly octaves. Zaimont's tempo is "Slow, eighth note = 88," and the tonal center is C-flat. The meter changes indicate the pattern of a gradual increase of beats per measure, from 6/8, 7/8 to 8/8.

"February" can be divided into a few phrases, rather than into sections. The first phrase, laid out in two measures, repeats three times in various formats including extended rhythm and length. The prelude consists of ten measures with a performance time of approximately a minute. The linear texture displays frequent leaps. Both hands play a wide range of the keyboard, beginning in the higher register with both hands in treble clef, and gradually moving lower with both hands in bass clef. Throughout the piece, both hands play mostly in octaves with a few ninths.

## ***Technical and Musical Challenges***

With its slow tempo and repeated phrases, reading "February" can be done without much trouble. On the other hand, because of the octaves, polished phrasing in the slow tempo might be challenging to produce. Also, unless the student's hands are big enough to reach an octave with the thumb and the fourth finger, there is no way to connect the sound except with pedal; thus the movement of octaves with accurate syncopated pedaling is crucial. In addition, playing octaves continuously requires proper wrist movement, especially for those with small hands. Even if the student can reach an octave, some tension might be unavoidable.

## Teaching Suggestions

### Playing octaves

Leimer states that “Octaves can be executed through plain finger work, and if the fingers become fixed, they can be played from the wrists, from the elbow, as well as from the shoulder.”<sup>42</sup> He claims that these movements should be controlled by practice, but the proper motion cannot be prepared when the passages are fast, and where there is no chance for relaxation. So, “February” provides an excellent initial step for moving into repertoire with fast octave passages or sections, such as one finds in “The Entertainer,” by Scott Joplin, or the last movement of Beethoven’s Sonata Op. 53, the “Waldstein.”

Initial octave practice should be executed *non legato*. I found that in the leaping passages it helps to pay more attention to the relaxation of the wrists after playing an octave. For more efficient practice, play with hands separately and then together (Ex. 8). With these exercises, place the hand in a position with a rather higher thumb and curved fifth finger. The importance lies more in how keys are released than how they are struck. After playing the first octave, lift the wrist first, so that the hand and fingers follow upward without effort. When lifting, the motion is not directly up, but to the right towards the next targeted octave, and so on. To descend, do the same motion, but lift up and move to the left.



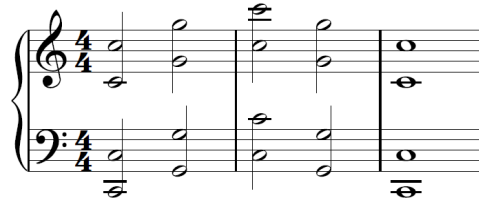
Example 8-1. Exercise for leaping octaves with right hand

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<sup>42</sup> Karl Leimer, *Rhythmic, Dynamics, Pedal and Other Problems of Piano Playing* (Pennsylvania: Theodore Presser, 1938), 115.

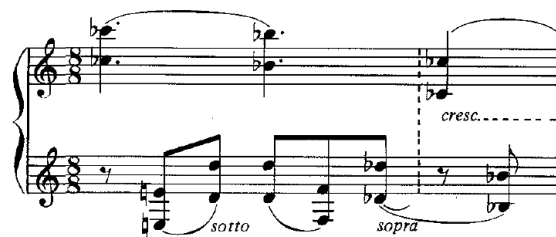


Example 8-2. Exercise for leaping octaves with left hand



Example 8-3. Exercise for leaping octaves with both hands

When the release motion becomes habitual, apply it to the prelude (Ex. 9). If necessary, begin hands separately, then put them together.



Example 9. "February," m. 5, with deleted pedal markings

### *Playing octaves with pedal*

As mentioned earlier, syncopated pedal, also known as overlapping or *legato* pedal, should be carried out in this prelude. A good approach is to practice pedaling with a simple rhythm, as in the above examples for octaves. Example 10 shows the same exercises with added pedal markings and modified note values. Taking the hands off the keys early helps to ensure that the pedal stays down until the very last moment. A general rule, which Josef Hoffman recommended, is to press “the lever or treadle down with a quick, definite, full motion and always immediately after the striking of the keys, never simultaneously with the stroke of the fingers.”<sup>43</sup> Saying “up-down” synchronously with pedal movement helps to coordinate the action of the hands and feet (Ex. 11). Begin with slow “up-down” pedal changes, on an eighth note, then use faster pedaling motions for sixteenth notes.



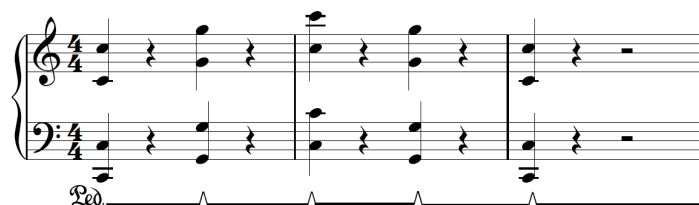
Example 10-1. Syncopated pedal exercise with octaves



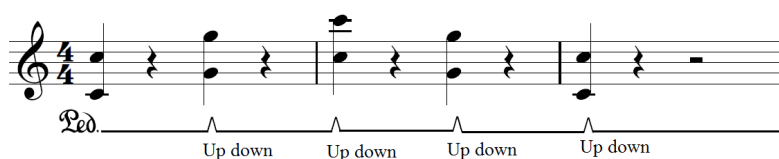
Example 10-2. Syncopated pedal exercise playing left-hand octaves

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<sup>43</sup> Josef Hofmann, *Piano Playing With Piano Questions Answered* (New York: Dover Publications, 1976), 41-42.



Example 10-3. Syncopated pedal exercise playing octaves in both hands



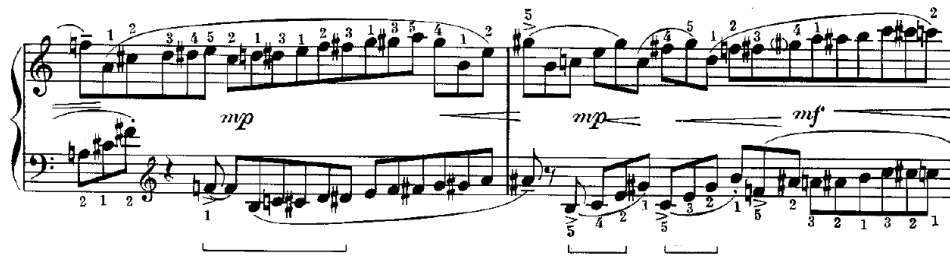
Example 11. Syncopated pedal exercise saying “up down”

### “March: The Winds Depart”

“March” reflects the influence of Chopin; the texture of the writing shows the similarity of the last movement of his second sonata, Op. 35 (Exs. 12 and 13).<sup>44</sup> Constant and fast-moving eighth notes (grouped in three even though they are not triplets) illustrate the blowing winds. In particular, some occurrences of parallel motion between the hands give the illusion of the rising wind. This wind rarely stops until the end of the prelude, when dotted quarter notes and a fermata appear. The wide range of dynamics expresses the wind’s tumult as the tempo marking, “with controlled turbulence,” suggests.

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<sup>44</sup> Adams, 41.



Example 12. “March,” mm. 5-6

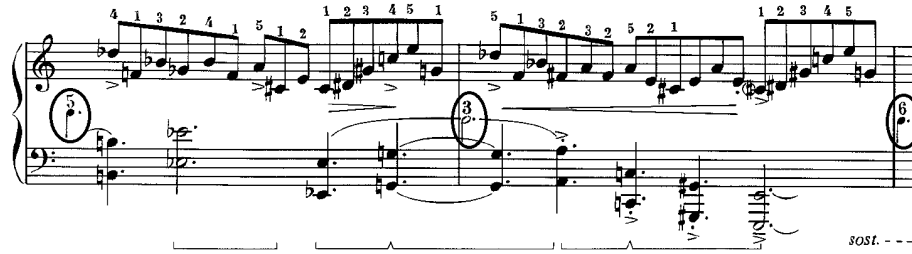


Example 13. Chopin Sonata, Op. 35, 4th movement: Finale, mm. 1-2

### *Elements*

The prelude is approximately a difficulty level 10. The tempo indicates “With controlled turbulence (dotted quarter note = 144-160)” in the beginning, which changes to “Prestissimo (dotted quarter note = 184-200)” later. It lacks any defined tonal center with its chromaticism. Zaimont uses unusual meters in this piece; for example, the bottom part of the time signature appears as note values rather than numerals (Ex. 14). The piece displays frequent shifts between various meters, including 3/dotted half note, 7/, 5/, 6/, 3/, and 4/dotted quarter note—shown in the order of appearance.





Example 14. “March,” mm. 26-27, with inserted indication of time signatures

Even though two different tempi define the two sections of the piece, it can be interpreted as through-composed because the writing is continuous and non repetitive. The prelude comprises thirty-four measures, relatively more compared to the others of the collection, yet the performance time is approximately one minute. The writing is linear, with the melody rising and falling quickly. The overall register stays in the middle and upper ranges of the keyboard, and an octave is the largest interval appearing in one hand, with very little use of other intervals.

### ***Technical and Musical Challenges***

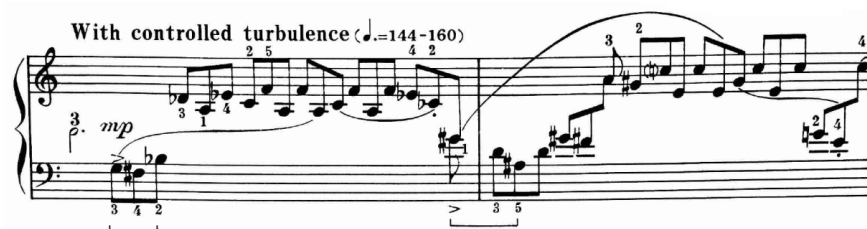
Despite Zaimont having written the prelude in unusual meters, her consistent use of eighth notes keep it from being too difficult. Still, when the eighth notes are linked continuously from one hand to the other, playing smoothly in a single line can be challenging. Zaimont notes, in the music, that the prelude should be played a little more detached and lighter than a *cantabile legato*, for a “lean and windy” effect.<sup>45</sup> Fast, arpeggio-like passages may also present some difficulties for those who have not developed the natural freedom in their wrists and forearms needed to create a light sound. Chromatic scales, briefly introduced, need practice for executing this prelude well.

<sup>45</sup> Zaimont, *Calendar Collection*, 4.

## Teaching Suggestions

### *Tossing melody between hands*

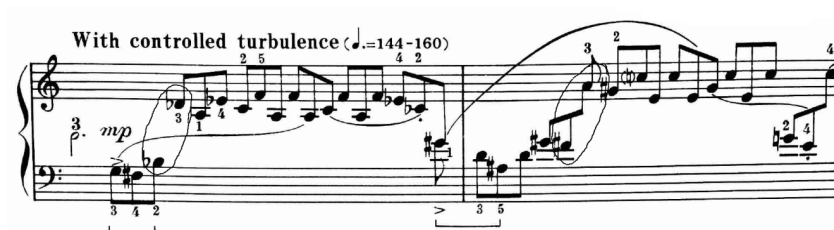
When a single melodic line is played by both hands continuously, creating smooth lines while tossing the melody from one hand to another might be challenging (Ex. 15). In this prelude, her suggested fingerings are marked with care, to avoid issues in this matter.



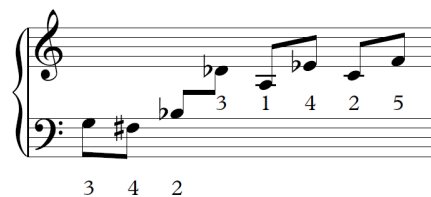
Example 15. “March,” mm. 1-2

To achieve the desired smooth line, play the first note of the receiving hand without an accent, at almost the same volume as the last note of the tossing hand (Ex. 16). Because all the eighth notes are grouped in three, the first note of each group tends to be emphasized, and that should be avoided in order to perform smooth and well shaped lines. It would be beneficial to regroup the passage to hear different kinds of sounds or shapes, especially for the first and last pairs (Ex. 17). If necessary, it would also be effective to accent the first note of each group to explore different groupings (Ex. 18). In m. 1, the D-flat receiving note, the first note in the right hand needing attention lies on a weak beat. Here the student might group the eighths into four notes, so the D-flat still falls on the weak beat (Ex. 19). In this exercise, it is beneficial to pause on the fourth note to play carefully with proper volume to drill on controlling the tone (Ex. 20)

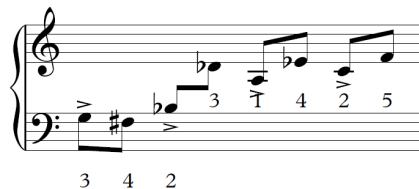
and then resume the original rhythm. After gaining the control of the D-flat, practice within Zaimont's musical context.



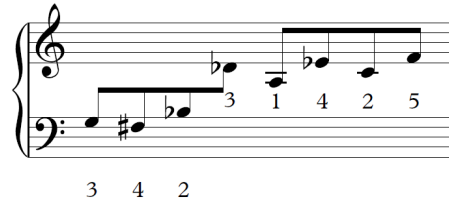
Example 16. "March," mm. 1-2, with inserted pairings played at same volume



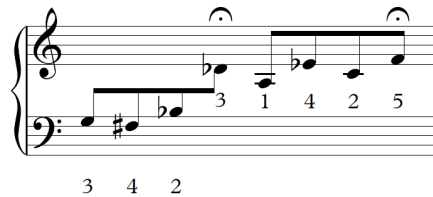
Example 17. Exercise for regrouping into two notes at beginning of m. 1



Example 18. Ex.17 with inserted accents



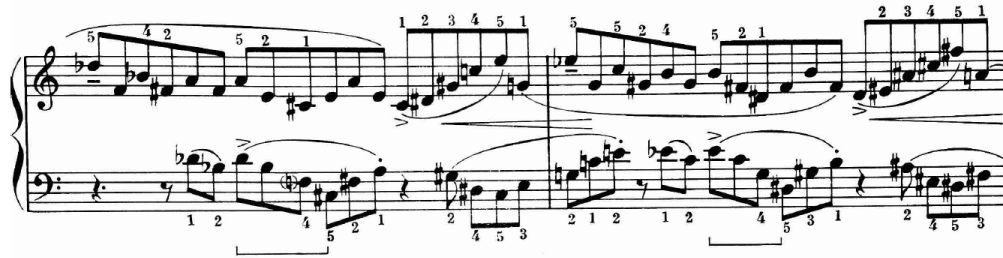
Example 19. Exercise for regrouping into four notes at beginning of m. 1



Example 20. Ex. 19 with inserted fermatas

### *Lighter touch*

As mentioned earlier, Zaimont notes that this prelude requires a detached and lighter touch but not *staccato* sound. The resonance between each note carries over just enough not to create an overlapping sound. One of the essential techniques for playing lightly in this piece lies in wrist rotation, as a tensed wrist will cause a heavier sound in the quickly rising and falling arpeggio-like leaps (Ex. 21).



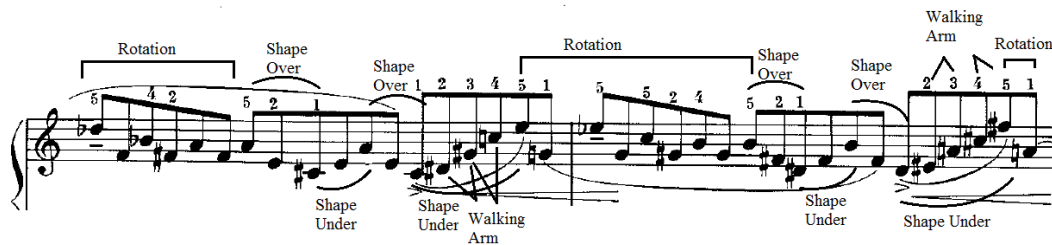
Example 21. “March,” mm. 3-4

Neil Stannard, pianist, teacher and author, states that “the favorite position of the hand is closed. To achieve this feeling, the arm must be behind the finger that is playing.”<sup>46</sup> When playing arpeggios, hands should not be stretched to cover all the notes, but the wrist or forearm should follow properly. In Example 22, a right-hand wrist rotation and forearm shaping are crucial. Rotation can be compared to turning a doorknob or seesawing, left to right, between two fingers. To play the notes marked “Rotation,” relax the wrist and swing it gently left and right. “Shaping over” and “shaping under” are executed by the forearm associated with the wrist. The right-hand group of descending pitches require the shape of a “flattened arc over to the left,” which is considered “shaping over,” and ascending passages require the shape of “flattened arc under to the right,” which is considered “shaping under.”<sup>47</sup> As the left hand mirrors the motion of the right hand, the left hand moves in the opposite direction of the right hand for the shaping movements. The “walking arm” markings in Example 22 denote a lateral walking motion when the fingers walk on to a new position without staying on their position, but not stretching to an

<sup>46</sup> Neil Stannard, *Piano Technique Demystified: Insights Into Problem Solving* (Lexington, KY: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014), 12.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

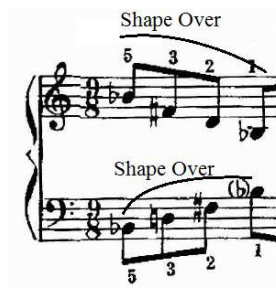
extreme.<sup>48</sup> The “Walking arm” is conducted within the forearm shaping motion. Because Example 22 combines various motions, practice each motion individually.



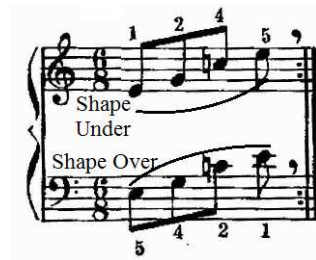
Example 22. “March,” mm. 3-4, right hand with inserted wrist and arm motion

The preparatory exercises that Zaimont includes in *Calendar Collection* build to an excellent exercise for a shaping motion in Example 23. It provides a good exercise for a shaping over motion not only for one hand but also for both hands, as they are in contrary motion. For a shaping under motion, play the exact same pitches going backwards. The last measure of the preparatory exercise (Ex. 24) is in parallel motion, which allows the student to practice with the hands moving in yet a different shape. Again, play the same notes in a descending manner for this other shaping motion.

<sup>48</sup> Stannard, 15.



Example 23. “March,” preparatory exercise, beginning of m. 2, with inserted shaping motion



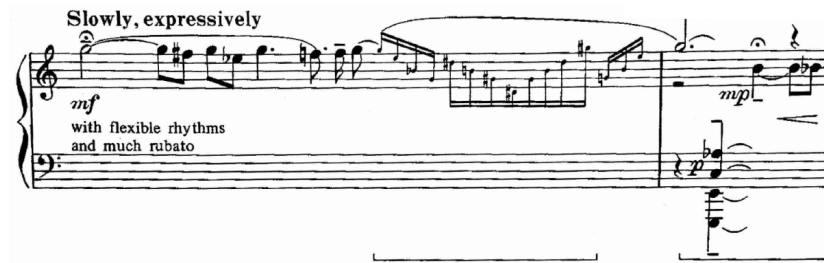
Example 24. “March,” preparatory exercise, m. 4, with inserted shaping motion

### “April: Recitative – The First Bird-song ”

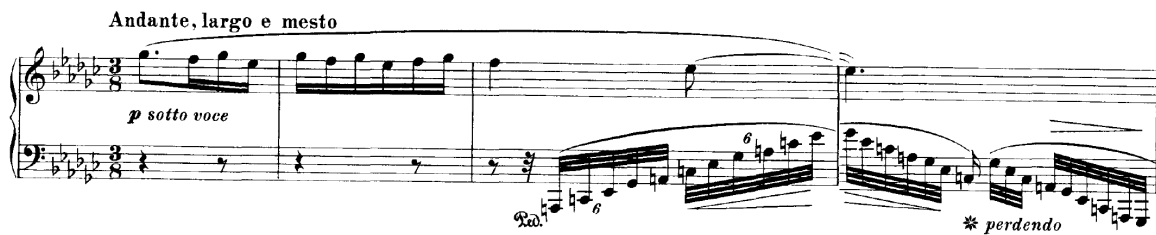
In “April,” Zaimont pays tribute to Brahms, specifically invoking his Op. 118, No. 6, Intermezzo in E-flat Minor (Exs. 25 and 26).<sup>49</sup> The intervallic pattern (alternating 2nds and 3rds), with some variation, is used throughout the prelude, similar to the Brahms’ “Intermezzo.” The singing bird is described by *cadenza*-like passages, with rhythmic freedom, using *rubato*.

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<sup>49</sup> Adams, 41.



Example 25. “April,” mm. 1-2



Example 26. Brahms, Op. 118, No. 6, Intermezzo in E-flat Minor mm. 1-4

## Elements

The prelude is comparable to a difficulty level 10. The tempo indicates “Slowly, expressively” with the performance instruction of “with flexible rhythms and much rubato,” and the tonal center is G. No meter displays appear in the entire piece, but Zaimont divides her musical ideas or phrases by bar line for performance convenience. They are divided into a variety of lengths. The form of this prelude is AB with a Coda: A (mm. 1-6) – B (mm. 7-17) – Coda (mm. 18-end).<sup>50</sup> The piece comprises nineteen measures with a performance time of approximately one minute and forty seconds. “April” displays the juxtaposition of a leaner texture for *cadenza*-like passages and a thick texture for the *f-fff* sections. The overall range stays

<sup>50</sup> Boyes, 346-347.



in the middle of the keyboard, even for the *cadenza*-like passages. The largest interval appearing in one hand is a ninth, but the student with smaller hands might select to roll the chords.

### ***Technical and Musical Challenges***

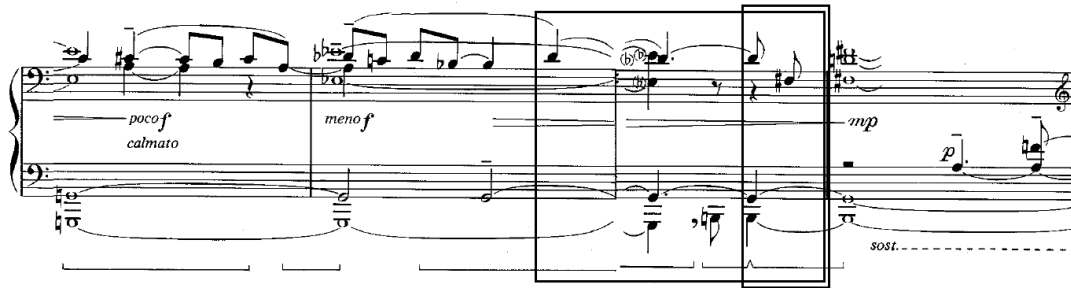
Frequent fermatas and flexible rhythms should be created with the use of *rubato*, the ultimate musical challenge in this prelude. The *rubato* is executed in large part by the performer's interpretation and expression of the music. Also, due to the absence of meter and the flexibility in rhythm, counting in this prelude may prove challenging. There are measures where counting either quarter or eighth notes is easier, or sometimes a combination of these works better. Occasionally, leaving off counting is more efficient due to the flexibility of the rhythm. Even though Zaimont suggests a slow tempo, the *cadenza*-like passages, written with small (cue) notes, move very quickly. Thus, sufficient practice is required to achieve a smooth, harp-like result.

### ***Teaching Suggestions***

#### ***Flexible rhythm (rubato)***

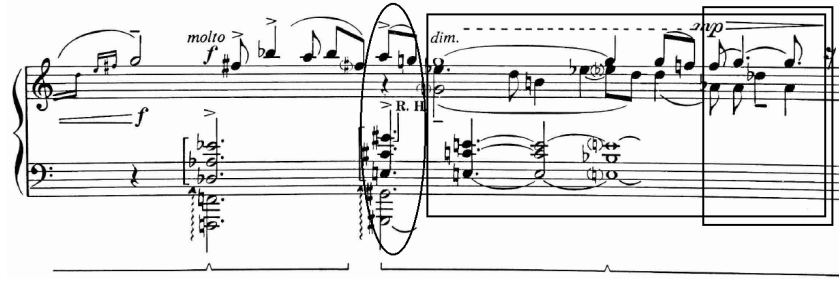
For the more experienced performer, the *rubato* may be executed naturally in the process of expressive playing. However, this might be more difficult for students with no exposure to the concept, and therefore it would be helpful for them to have an idea beforehand of what it involves. A few rules will describe this. First, as shown in the boxes (Ex. 27), slow down towards the end of the phrase when a long *diminuendo* appears. So, begin with a slight *ritardando* from where the box first appears in the measure and use a larger *ritardando* in the

double box. After this *rubato*, keep a steady rhythm in the desired tempo, so that the combination of slowing down and the strict rhythm result in a flexible give and take within the phrase.



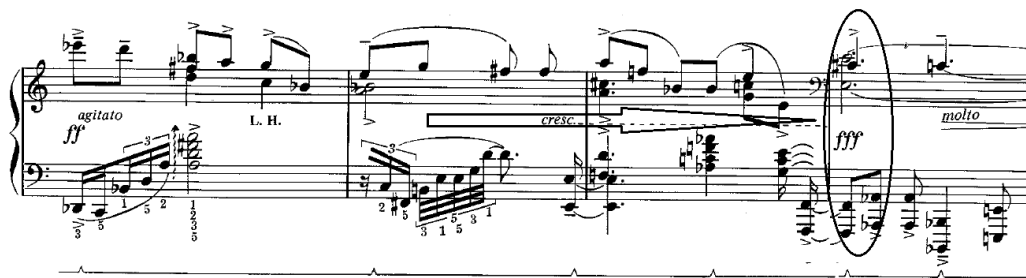
Example 27. "April," mm. 12-15, with inserted boxes indicating where to take time

Second, take time, with a very loose rhythm, to emphasize one moment (Ex. 28). Several accents appear in the beginning of Example 28. Instead of taking time for each, it is better to select one to emphasize a climax in the passage. The oval marking indicates a point where the music has built up and arrived at a major climactic moment. Take time here with the right hand from A5 to G5 after a steady build-up. Then the first rule applies for the passage outlined with boxes.



Example 28. “April,” mm. 5, with inserted oval denoting climax chord, and boxes indicating where to take time

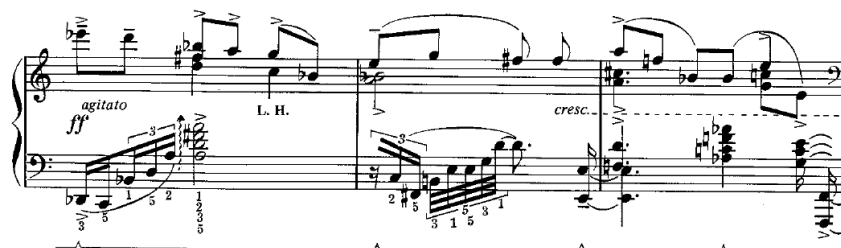
Third, this exciting moment can be expressed by moving forward with an *accelerando*. Excitement builds from the end of the A section into the beginning of the B section, reaching a climax with *fortississimo*, in m. 11. As the music nears the climax, speed up gradually, and, when arriving at the peak, apply the second rule by taking more time as you move on to the next beat (Ex. 29). The arrow indicates an increase of speed, and the oval represents the *rubato* concept as in Example 28.



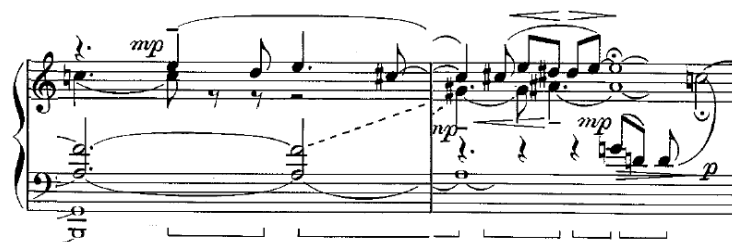
Example 29. “April,” mm. 8-11, with inserted arrow indicating *accelerando*, and oval denoting climax chord

## Counting

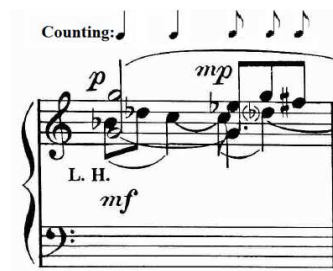
An absence of meter causes both difficulty and freedom in counting when learning “April.” As mentioned earlier, some measures can benefit from counting quarter notes, eighth notes, or a combination of both; some measures need not be counted. In the B section, several measures appear to be in 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4. On these occasions, count using the quarter note as a beat (Ex. 30). Example 31 represents an instance where counting eighth notes is effective. There are rare occasions where counting using a combination of both quarter notes and eighth notes is effective, as shown in Example 32. The opening of the prelude provides an example where the performer does not need to count because of the rhapsodic and improvisatory nature of this phrase (Ex. 33).



Example 30. “April,” mm. 8-10



Example 31. “April,” mm. 16-17



Example 32. “April,” mm. 3, counting the measure



Example 33. “April,” mm. 1

### “May: The May-fly”

The two-note slurs of sixteenth notes in the right hand fly through this piece, breathlessly, as the tempo marking indicates. For the most part, the left hand plays against the right hand rhythmically.

### *Elements*

The prelude is comparable to a difficulty level of 10. The tempo indicates “Breathlessly, dotted quarter note = 72,” and the tonality ambiguously centers around C major. The meter stays in 3/8, an uncommon one for the *Collection*. It uses a Rondo form: Introduction (mm. 1-3) – A (mm. 4-first half of 16) – B (mm. second half of 16-first half of 29) – A<sup>1</sup> (mm. first half of 29-39)

– C (mm. 39-50) – A<sup>2</sup> (mm. 51-68) – Coda (mm. 69-end).<sup>51</sup> The piece comprises seventy-four measures with a performance time of approximately one minute and seven seconds. The texture consistently displays dyads in the right hand and a single line in the left. The overall range stays in the middle and upper registers of the keyboard, and the higher part is mostly played with left-hand crossings. A fifth is the largest interval appearing in one hand, with the interval of a third predominating.

### ***Technical and Musical Challenges***

Unlike the right hand, which plays the same rhythm throughout the prelude, the left hand has three different rhythmic patterns that constantly and quickly shift, one at a time against the right hand rhythm. So, it is necessary to play the left hand securely before putting the hands together. Performing hands together is one of the most challenging aspects for this piece. Playing dyads consecutively in a pattern of two-note slurs in sixteenths, followed by a sixteenth rest, requires sufficient practice.

### ***Teaching Suggestions***

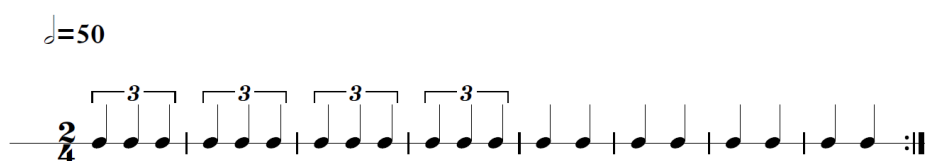
*“In three” vs. “in two”*

The rhythm clapping exercise in Example 34 is good preparation for shifting from “in three” (three notes per measure) to “in two” (two notes per measure). Set the metronome and divide the beat into three by clapping, then divide the beat into two. As you practice, raise or lower the metronome number. Make sure that the metronome clicks one time per measure. After they are able to successfully manage this rhythmic shifting between “three” and “two” beats per measure, have students try Example 35. This example uses a rhythmic identical to Example 34,

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<sup>51</sup> Boyes, 349-350.

but is written as the music in “May.” If playing two dotted-eighth notes in 3/8 is not new for the student, she might begin the exercise in Example 35. Once the shifting rhythm causes no problem, play the passage in the prelude (Ex. 36) beginning with left hand alone. Because the rhythms in the right and left hands move independently, it is strongly recommended that student master the following exercise, “Matching Right-Hand and Left-Hand Rhythm.”



Example 34. Rhythm exercise in 2/4



Example 35. Rhythm exercise in 3/8



Example 36. “May,” mm. 21-24

### *Matching right-hand and left-hand rhythm*

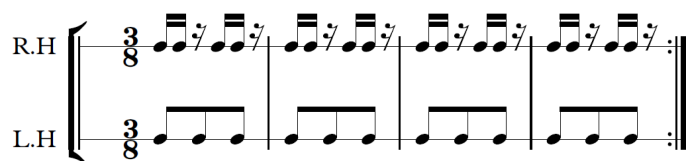
Zaimont presents a preparatory exercise for the left hand, playing with a simpler version of the right-hand pattern (Ex. 37). This exercise helps the student learn to coordinate the left-hand rhythm with the right hand. It also covers the fifth finger crossing over the first in the left hand, which appears often in “May.” Although coordinating the rhythms in both hands is complicated, only three rhythmic patterns must be learned. Tapping with both hands should be a good method for practice when first learning this prelude.



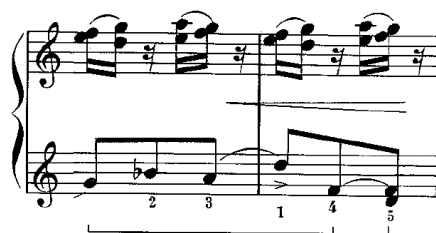
Example 37. “May,” preparatory exercise

The first pattern, played by the left hand “in three” (Exs. 38 and 39), might be practiced with an altered rhythm by inserting rests (Exs. 40 and 41). The second pattern, with the left hand “in two” using two dotted eighth notes (Exs. 42 and 43), also has an altered rhythm (Exs. 44 and 45). Finally, the third pattern features the left hand “on the rest” (Exs. 46 and 47). These exercises of three kinds of patterns, cover all the possibilities of right and left hands rhythmic combinations found in the piece.





Example 38. Rhythmic pattern 1



Example 39. "May," mm. 9-10, using rhythmic pattern 1



Example 40. Rhythmic pattern 1, with altered left hand



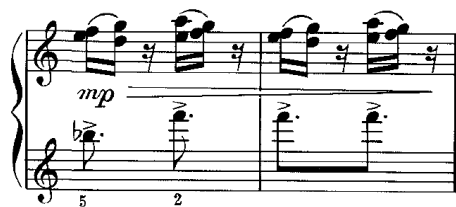
Example 41-1. "May," m. 4, using altered left hand rhythmic pattern 1



Example 41-2. "May," m. 11, using altered left hand rhythmic pattern 1



Example 42. Rhythmic pattern 2



Example 43. "May," mm. 12-13, using rhythmic pattern 2



Example 44. Rhythmic pattern 2, with altered left hand



Example 45-1. “May,” m. 24, using altered left hand rhythmic pattern 2



Example 45-2. “May,” m. 46, using altered left hand rhythmic pattern 2



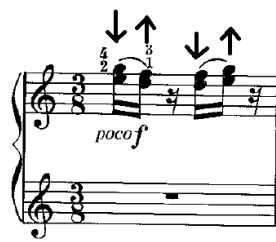
Example 46. Rhythmic pattern 3



Example 47. “May,” mm. 26-28, using rhythmic pattern 3

### *Two-note slurs with double notes*

Playing two-note slurs requires a basic wrist movement involving a down and up motion (Ex. 48). With this motion the first note naturally gets more emphasis. Play the second note by brushing through the key as the hand and the wrist rise. It is helpful to treat the second note lightly as if it was marked *staccato*. Until the motion and the proper sound are established, practice with single notes (Ex. 49). After becoming accustomed to the single note, add another note (Ex. 50). Playing two-note slurs with double notes requires well-curved fingers for the downward motion.



Example 48. “May,” m. 1, two-note slur with inserted indication of down and up



Example 49. Exercise for two-note slur on single notes



Example 50. Exercise for two-note slur on double notes

### **“June: A Walking ’Round Song ”**

For “June,” Zaimont’s use of moving parallel thirds in the left hand imitates walking, while the melody sings above. This prelude is the first of three in *Calendar Collection* using key signatures, and is also one of two movements where Zaimont gives no specific pedal markings.

#### ***Elements***

The prelude is comparable to a difficulty level of 10. The tempo indicates “A tempo di allegretto ma flessibile (quarter note = 104-112),” and the key is A major. The form is ABA<sup>1</sup>: A (mm. 1-12) – B (mm. 13-22) – A<sup>1</sup> (mm. 23-end). The A section meter shifts irregularly between 3/4, 5/8 and 4/4; the B section between 4/4, 3/4 and 2/4; and the A<sup>1</sup> section between 9/8, 3/4 and 4/4. The piece comprises thirty-five measures with a duration of approximately one minute and thirty seconds. The texture comprises a simple right-hand melody with left-hand accompaniment throughout. The overall range stays in the middle of the keyboard, and a tenth is the largest interval appearing in one hand, with Zaimont’s suggested substitute of an octave for those who cannot reach the wider interval.

#### ***Technical and Musical Challenges***

The left-hand accompaniment repeats a pattern of alternating between harmonic thirds and single notes, sometimes with the single notes on the beat (Ex. 51) and other times with the

thirds on the beat (Ex. 52). Although Example 52 lies within natural finger movement, it might be challenging for some players to execute the thirds on the offbeat in Example 51. Also, the *hemiola* (see Example 56-1), which moves rhythmically against the notes in the right hand, may cause some difficulty. Throughout the prelude, frequent *rallentandos* followed by *a tempo* require training in control of tempo.



Example 51. “June,” mm. 1-2, left hand



Example 52. “June,” mm. 3-4, left hand

### ***Teaching Suggestions***

#### *Left-hand pattern*

Zaimont suggests a beneficial preparatory exercise for the left-hand (Ex. 53), which covers many possible fingerings, including crossings. It is best to begin at a slow tempo, gradually increasing to the suggested quarter note = 104-112.



Example 53. “June,” preparatory exercises for left hand

As mentioned earlier, in Example 51, the student might play the rhythm a bit off-kilter (unlike Ex. 52, which is more straightforward on strong beats) just as playing an Alberti bass with ease might slip after playing a few patterns of a modified version of it (Ex. 54). There is a simple trick to playing Zaimont’s first exercise without trouble (Ex. 55). By playing the first eighth note as an anacrusis, the exercise becomes the pattern seen in Example 52. It also creates a smooth connection between the two examples (51 and 52).



Example 54. Left-hand broken chord



Example 55. “June,” mm. 1-2 left hand, with modified bar

## *Hemiola*

A *hemiola* is not technically difficult once the student is aware of how the time fits or crosses the bars (Ex. 56). After practicing within each hand's own division, put the hands together.



Example 56-1. "June," mm. 14-15, with inserted indication of left-hand rhythmic division



Example 56-2. "June," mm. 14-15, left hand, with rearranged bar

## **"July: Holiday"**

The mood of the Fourth of July holiday is depicted by bouncy, rhythmic, and well-accented figures. The right-hand melody simulates the ragtime style of Scott Joplin in syncopated, jagged rhythms, which feature falling phrases.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Boyes, 357.



## ***Elements***

The prelude is similar to a difficulty level of 8. The tempo indicates “Easily, eighth note = c. 132,” in the key of B-flat major.<sup>53</sup> The meter moves between 3/8, 4/8, and 5/4. Its form is composed of Introduction (mm. 1-4) – A (mm. 5-23) – Coda (24-end). The piece comprises twenty-seven measures with a duration of approximately one minute and ten seconds. The texture displays frequent triads against a linear melodic line. The overall range stays mostly in the middle register for the right hand and the lower register for the left hand. An octave is the largest interval appearing in one hand.

## ***Technical and Musical Challenges***

“July” uses syncopation frequently, often involving accents and *staccato*. To execute the syncopated rhythm, proper use of the pedal with *staccato* articulations is essential. In the left hand, the majority of the bass line moves in octaves—preceded or followed by triads—that requires big leaps.

## ***Teaching Suggestions***

### ***Syncopation***

Syncopation used in this prelude is written so that the *staccato* supports the rhythmic accent (Ex. 57). Therefore, executing the bouncy *staccato* and well-accented strong beat is crucial to producing the rhythmic characteristic. Taking a fraction of a moment, and not making an obvious pause after the *staccato* (and before playing the accented note), helps to create the syncopated rhythm. It helps to imagine taking a fraction of a moment before playing the accented note. The *staccato* aids the feeling of the moment, and the pause should not be obvious.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 358. Boyes identified the pentatonic set 02479 as “July”’s foundation.



Example 57. “July,” mm. 4

In “July,” the pedal should be lifted on the *staccato* notes throughout (Ex. 58). Especially, when these notes occur continuously, proficient exercise is required, including slow practice.



Example 58. “July,” mm. 16-18

### *Big leaps*

Zaimont provides an exercise for achieving the left-hand leaps (Ex.59). Practice with a metronome set to a tempo that can be played without any hesitation, then gradually increase the tempo to eighth note = 132. Visualize the preparatory exercise with rests and *staccatos* inserted to encourage the quick movement needed for the leaps (Ex. 60).



Example 59. “July,” preparatory exercise



Example 60. “July,” preparatory exercise, with inserted rests and *staccatos*

### “August: Anthem”

In a contrasting the mood to “July,” “August” should be performed in the peaceful manner of Zaimont’s chordal writing. Within this static environment, a wide range of gradual dynamic changes gives the prelude the impression of large spaces.

#### *Elements*

The prelude is similar to a difficulty level of 7. The tempo indicates “In a stately manner, half note = 46,” and the tonal center is G. The meter displays irregular shifts between 3/2 and 4/2. The form is composed of A (mm. 1-8) – B (mm. 9-16) – A<sup>1</sup> (mm. 17-end). The piece comprises twenty-four measures with a performance time of approximately two minute and thirty seconds.

The texture demonstrates chordal writing throughout. The overall range stays in the middle of the keyboard, and a tenth is the largest interval appearing in one hand.

### ***Technical and Musical Challenges***

The melody of “August” usually lies in the top voice of the right hand, and should be brought out by “an extra intensity of tone and a slightly louder dynamic level.”<sup>54</sup> Frequent use of suspensions at the end of phrases should be served with proper tone as if to taper off in a similar manner of the two-note slur. Zaimont uses breath marks in the music, which require musical breathing without affecting the tempo. Well-syncopated pedaling is crucial for the vertical writing of the prelude.

### ***Teaching Suggestions***

#### *Top voice*

Projecting one voice over another (or “voicing”) in playing four-part writing—as in “August”—requires executing a different quality of tone (Ex. 61). Imagine bringing out the brighter sound on the top voice. Stannard suggests that “moving more quickly into the key and with more weight”<sup>55</sup> will help students to voice better. Also, more curved or more vertical fingers for executing the top voice help to create the desired sound.

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<sup>54</sup> Zaimont, *Calendar Collection*.

<sup>55</sup> Stannard, 62.



Example 61. "August," mm. 1-2

A simple exercise using a five-finger pattern can be used to practice voicing the top line (Ex. 62). After playing the five-finger pattern in G, focus on hearing the same quality of tone as played in mm. 3-4 of Example 62. In learning this exercise, it is beneficial to exaggerate between the louder and the softer voices. The thumb should feel as if it plays "on the surface of the keys,"<sup>56</sup> rather than into the keys. More advanced exercises might involve familiar tunes or more complicated voicing (Ex. 63). In Example 63, mm. 9-12 require a more advanced level of control because of the presence of eighth notes. Preparatory exercises included in the music can be used for this voicing purpose as well as syncopated pedal practice (Ex. 64).



Example 62. Exercise for voicing top notes

<sup>56</sup> Stannard, 62.



Example 63. Exercise for voicing top notes for “Ode to Joy”



Example 64. “August,” preparatory exercise

### *Breathing*

Breathing for pianists may not appear to be as important as for vocalists or wind instrumentalists. However, breathing can and should be used to define phrases in piano playing. In playing chamber music, coordinating the breath helps the entire ensemble play together.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, breathing practice is recommended for pianists. In “August,” Zaimont uses breath marks to coordinate phrases and to prepare for approaching dynamic changes (Ex. 65). While

<sup>57</sup> Thomas Mark, *What Every Pianist Needs to Know About Their Body* (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2003), 125.

breath marks in piano music need not mean to physically breathe, they imply taking enough time for a phrase, without rushing, as well as denote a short gap in the phrase or at the end of a phrase. It is helpful for the student to try actually inhaling if she has trouble with appropriate timing. For students who have never pondered the concept of breathing while playing, Burmeister suggests including breathing exercises in piano warm-ups.<sup>58</sup> Such exercises include playing scales or arpeggios, breathing in while ascending, and breathing out while descending.



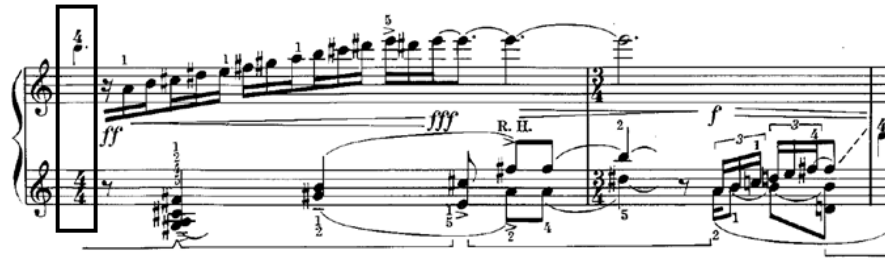
Example 65. “August,” mm. 8-12

### “September: The Winds Arise”

The winds that depart in “March” arise again in “September.” While the winds of “March” move up and down the scales quickly, in “September,” they move in longer lines with larger dynamic changes, featuring scalar as well as more intricate figurations. Although “September” moves very fast and constantly, Zaimont’s fingerings aid its execution. As in “April,” Zaimont uses an unusual meter, placing a dotted quarter note on the bottom. In this prelude, sometimes she writes the right- and left-hand parts in different meters; one has a dotted quarter note and the other a quarter note (denoted by the numeral 4) on the bottom of the time

<sup>58</sup> Ellen Burmeister, *Keyboard Sight Reading*. (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1991), 21.

signatures (Ex. 66). However, this is for notation only and does not affect the difficulty of performance. In playing these meters simultaneously, the hands align rhythmically as if the right hand consisted of triplets or sextuplets.



Example 66. “September,” mm. 14-15, with inserted indication of time signatures

### *Elements*

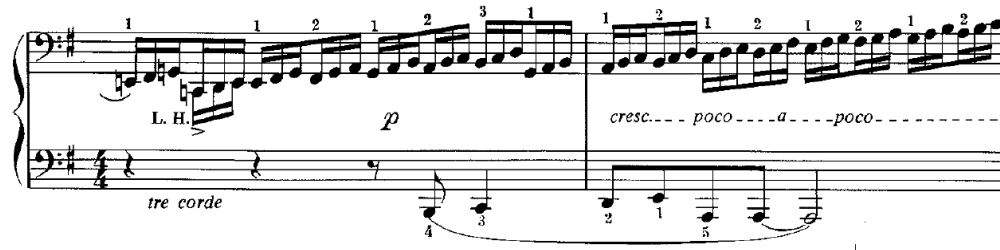
The prelude is approximately a difficulty level of 10. The tempo indicates “Convulsively, dotted quarter note = 100-112” and the tonal center is E. The prelude shows frequent and various meter changes. In Section A the meter shifts from 4/ dotted quarter note to 4/4 in the left hand, while the right hand stays the same; in Section B, the meter stays the same; in Section C it shifts irregularly between 2/dotted quarter note, 3/dotted quarter note, and 4/dotted quarter note; and, in Section D, between 2/4, 3/4, 4/4 and 3/2.

“September” consists of four sections with distinct characteristics. The A section (mm. 1-7)<sup>59</sup> includes scalar passages throughout (Ex. 67), while in the B section (mm. 7-15), scalar appearances contain repetitions of a shorter length (Ex. 68). Section C (mm. 15-27) contains

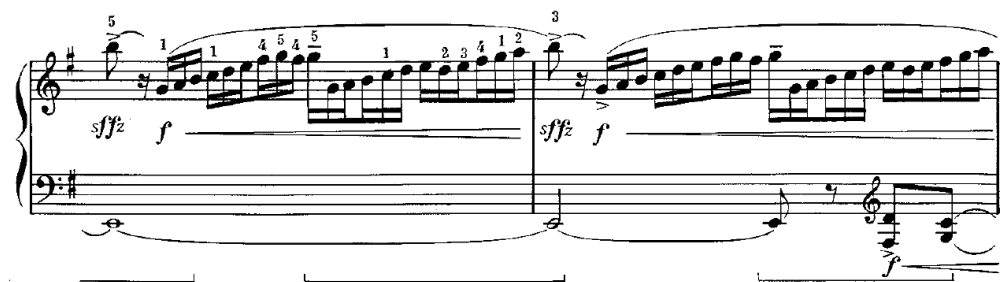
<sup>59</sup> Boyes, 366. Boyes views mm. 1-2 in the A as an introduction, but I would consider these measures as part of the A section; they are fragments of figures that reappear later. These measures seem too short to operate as an introduction, acting more as if to ignite the piece.



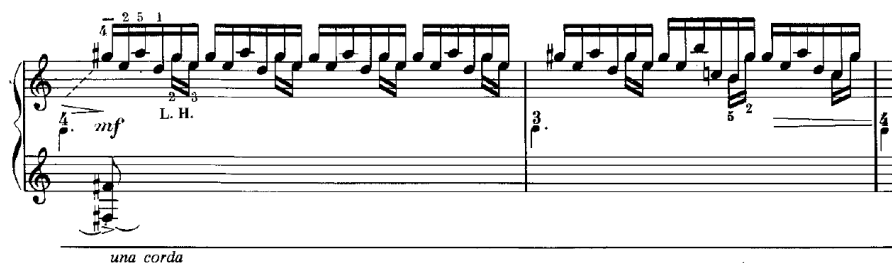
more intricate figurations, still in running sixteenth notes (Ex. 69). Section D (mm. 27-end) displays a completely different texture and style (Ex. 70). The movement comprises forty measures with a performance time of approximately one minute and forty-five seconds. The texture remains linear until Section C, and the D section displays thick chordal writing. The overall range of “September” stays in the middle of the keyboard except in the last measure, where it moves higher, into *8va*. An octave is the largest interval appearing in one hand.



Example 67. “September,” mm. 3-4



Example 68. “September,” mm. 7-8



Example 69. “September,” mm. 16-17



Example 70. “September,” mm. 28-30

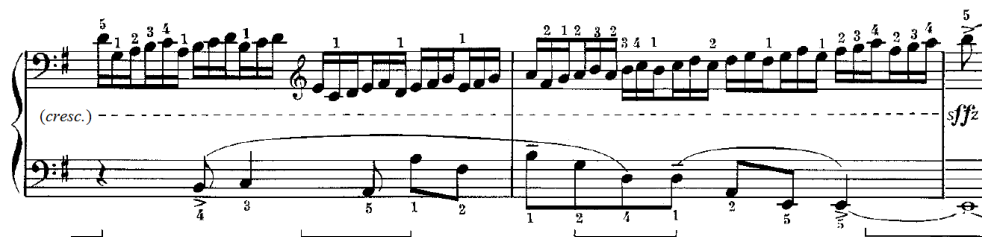
### ***Technical and Musical Challenges***

In “September,” Zaimont indicates frequent dynamic changes with *crescendo* and *decrescendo*; however, most of the time these remain fairly simple to execute as they are realized naturally. For instance, she uses *cresc.* as the music ascends and *decresc.* as it descends. On many occasions, right-hand scalar passages appear in groups of three sixteenths, moving very quickly. The challenge lies in playing them as smoothly as the sound of wind. In the same manner, the more intricate figures played between the hands in Section C should be *legato*, with all the notes blending together. Thus, the interruption of using the left hand for every group of sextuplets in the overlapping hand positions proves risky for the pianist, who must avoid unwanted accents or unevenness.

## Teaching Suggestions

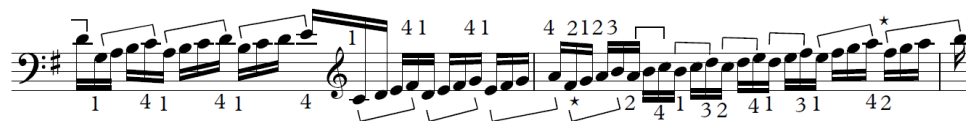
### *Smooth and effortless scalar passages*

Any kind of fast passage requires repeated practice to achieve fluency. When the passages move not just in one direction, but zigzag, demanding cramped hand positions, they need even more intelligent practice (Ex. 71). Stannard states that “putting together the notes that move in the same direction” helps to execute challenging fast passages successfully.<sup>60</sup> Example 72 shows the application of what he calls the “technical grouping.” When practicing, the student should consider the first note of each group as a “mini-starting” point, but avoid emphasizing it. This approach helps to create the line with flawless sound because this grouping does not fall into the original groups of three sixteenth notes. It is also beneficial for a performance free of hesitation, as the grouping allows comfortable hand and wrist motion, which in turn allows the fast passage to be performed with ease. Practice these groupings until they can be played effortlessly and muscle memory of the rotation movement is solid. The rotation involved in each group in Example 72 shows certain patterns of 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3, and 2-3-4, except for the starred group.

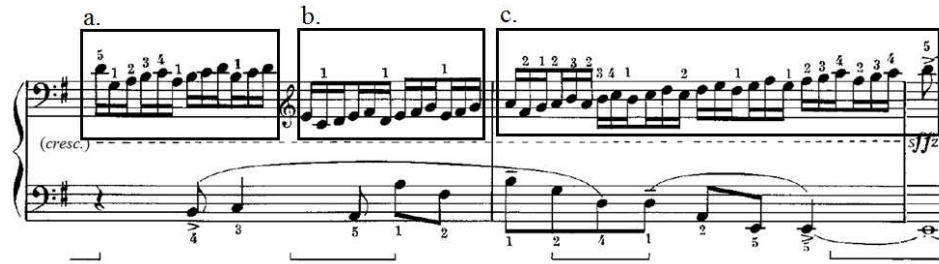


Example 71. “September,” mm. 5-downbeat of 7

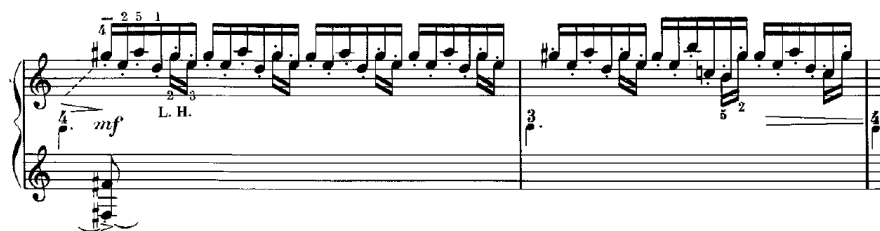
<sup>60</sup> Stannard, 17.



Careful phrasing also helps to create a smooth line in these passages. The right hand in Example 71 has no slur, as it has had from the end of m. 2. In addition, Zaimont has a *crescendo* sign, covering three measures, from mm. 4-6. This restless passage with extended increasing volume might be challenging to shape and express. Therefore the student should practice smaller units and shape them accordingly. In Example 73, the units *a* and *b* show a similar pattern of action, while *c* moves up in a longer run. Although the whole of Example 73 is under the influence of a *crescendo*, shaping each portion of the passage renders the long line easier to polish. As for any other phrase shaping, the pianist might, “sneak in” by starting soft at the beginnings of units *a*, *b*, and *c*, as well as “sneak out” by tapering off at the ends of *a* and *b*. Note that the beginning or end of the unit requires the pianist to play at a different volume. The beginning of *b* would be louder than the beginning of *a*, as the *crescendo* makes *b* louder than *a*. Likewise, the beginning of *c* would be louder than the beginning of *b*, even as the pianist “sneaks in” on both.



### Overlapping hand position



Example 74. “September,” mm. 16-17, with inserted *staccatos*

### “October: Autumn Thoughts”

“October” is one of the easiest preludes of the *Collection*, along with “February.”

“October” is more approachable for younger students, or those with small hands, because of its smaller intervals, whereas “February” includes constant octaves or larger intervals. “October” requires the performer to exude a meditative quality, executing repeated intervals in the left hand while keeping a calm and smooth manner, as indicated by Zaimont.

#### *Elements*

The prelude is comparable to a difficulty level of 6. The tempo indicates “Molto moderato (quarter note = 56),” and the tonal center is D. The meter remains mostly in 3/4 with the exception of brief interruptions in 2/4 and 3/4 in the A<sup>1</sup> section. The form is composed of A (mm. 1-6) – B (mm. 7-17) – A<sup>1</sup> (mm. 18-end). “October” consists of twenty-six measures with a performance time of approximately one minute and forty-five seconds. The linear texture unfolds in mostly single notes in the left hand and double notes in the right. Overall, the piece stays in a narrowed middle range of the keyboard, and the octave is the largest interval appearing in one hand.

### ***Technical and Musical Challenges***

The prelude is written with uncomplicated rhythms in steady eighth notes. In addition, repetitive left-hand figures ease the learning of the piece. Although the right hand often demonstrates syncopated rhythm, the slow tempo alleviates any difficulties the student might encounter regarding the counting. However, it might be challenging to perform this simple and slow piece in an interesting and musical way.

### ***Teaching Suggestions***

#### *Interpretation and expression*

As anyone who has studied piano intently knows, good piano playing involves expressing the performer's interpretation and convincing the audience what she or he sees or hears in the music. "October" offers a great opportunity for students to use their own experience or emotion to enhance their interpretation. Whereas the other preludes in the *Collection* are good pieces for the expression of specific pianistic characteristics, the easier level of "October" allows for more of the performer's individual interpretation.

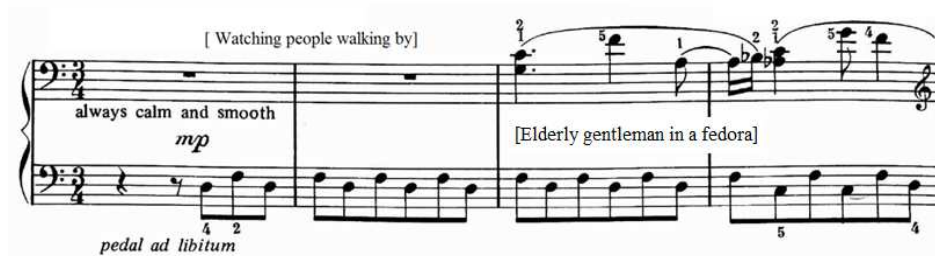
Stannard gives three considerations for the teacher to help performers express music in performance.<sup>61</sup> First, the teacher might ask the student to describe what the piece is about. The title and the subtitle already offer suggestions, but a series of questions from the teacher may be necessary for the student to delve deeper into what the piece means. Guide the student to think of scenes from her own life that are reminiscent; relating the music to colors, scent, or scenery might also be useful. Creating a story within the course of music could also be beneficial. For example, I might imagine that the prelude is about a woman sitting in a coffee shop looking

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<sup>61</sup> Stannard, 113.

outside on a cloudy day, watching people walk by, all nobodies to the woman until she spots an elderly gentleman in a fedora who perks up her interest.

Second, have the student imagine and attach meanings as instructions in the music, such as directions or dynamic signs (Ex. 75). Ask the student about the dynamics. For example, does the *mezzo piano* in the prelude mean to play at a particular level of the volume, or how is the composer describing quality? Also ask the student to contemplate the composer's request, "always calm and smooth." How calm or smooth should the interpretation be? Discuss how each symbol or designation on the score could affect the story the student tells.



Example 75. "October," mm. 1-4, with inserted description

Third, examine how Zaimont structures the musical lines. Explore how the student might establish phrases. Consider how various movements of the melody, such as the rise and fall, or moving forward and holding back, help sculpt the line.

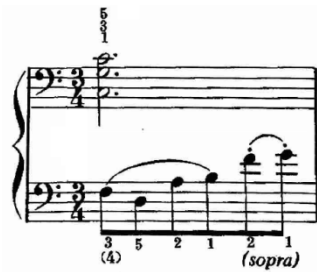


### *Portato (mezzo-staccato)*

*Portato*, also known as *mezzo-staccato*, is to be played between *legato* and *staccato*.

Leimer states that it is “a matter of tone separation without restriction of note values.”<sup>62</sup>

Producing detached or disconnected notes would be the proper approach to play *portato* in Example 76.



Example 76. “October,” m. 23

### **“November: Secret Thunder”**

Zaimont portrays the thunder in “November” with intensive trills and tremolos. These come as if from a distance. In the beginning she marks them *ppp*, then uses louder dynamics to convey their gradual approach reaching *ff* and *sffz* in measures 11-12, followed by their disbursement at *mp*. At the end of “November” the thunder disappears, with a *pppp*, using the *una corda* pedal.

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<sup>62</sup> Leimer, 114

## ***Elements***

The prelude is comparable to a difficulty level of 7. Tempo indicates “Slow (eighth note = c. 72),” and the tonal center is A. The meter shifts between 4/4 and 3/4, with one appearance of 9/8. The form might be read as five mirrored sections, based on the distance of the sound.<sup>63</sup> The approach and abatement of the sound of thunder neatly divides the piece into the following sections: “from a distance” (mm. 1-4) – “getting closer” (mm. 5-8) – “most intense” (mm. 8-13) – “going away” (mm. 13-17) – “at a further distance” (mm. 18-end). The piece comprises twenty-one measures with a performance time of approximately two minute and twenty seconds. The texture is thin with a constant use of trills and tremolos. The overall range is confined to the middle of the keyboard, staying primarily in the lower part of this range. An octave is the largest interval appearing in one hand, with various intervals used for tremolos.

## ***Technical and Musical Challenges***

The main techniques Zaimont uses in “November” are trills and tremolos, in a wide dynamic range between *pppp* and *ff*. Even for students who have no problem performing trills, this piece could be a challenge for executing two voices with one hand, as one finger sustains a note while other fingers perform the trills. However, the longer notes need not be held with the fingers, as Zaimont includes a pedal marking to sustain throughout each passage. The sustained notes, accompanied by accents, require emphasis. Even though they are voiced over the subdued trills or tremolos, they might prove not too difficult to perform; the voiced notes are always played either as sixteenth or thirty-second notes before the trill or tremolo, rather than simultaneously. Producing smooth and flowing trills and tremolos throughout is the most challenging technique in the prelude.

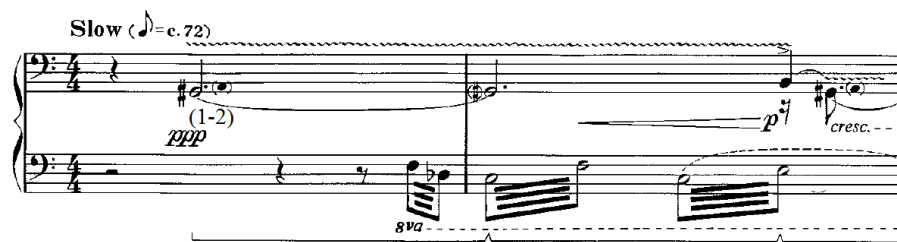
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<sup>63</sup> Boyes, 375-376. Boyes identified four sections.

## Teaching Suggestions

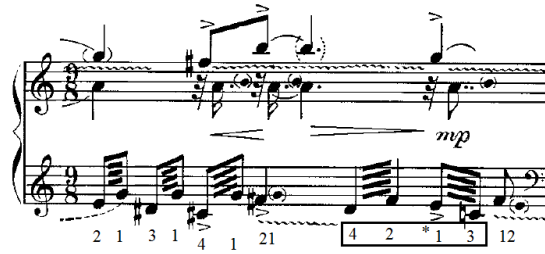
### Trills and tremolos

It is important to choose proper fingerings for trills and tremolos in order to execute a flowing line, as none are provided in the score. Find the most comfortable fingerings, especially for those notes with longer values. The right hand in Example 77 has a trill between a black key and a white key. Even though using the thumb on the black key is traditionally avoided, in this case it may be easier to use a 1-2 fingering to control the *ppp* passage for such a long time. It is essential to play the trills or tremolos from the starting position of resting on the keyboard, not allowing them to hover above the keys before pressing down, for a smooth and fast result.



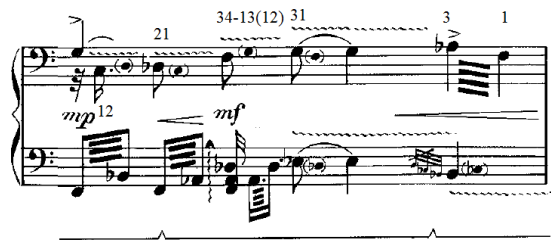
Example 77. "November," mm. 1-2, with inserted fingerings in right hand

In Example 78, the fingerings 4-2 – 1-3 are recommended, as shown in the box. Superficially, 4-2 – 3-5 might seem best for this spot because the player need not shift hand position. However, when weak fingers are involved, playing tremolo becomes more difficult. Although the suggested fingerings demand that the player place the thumb under, as indicated by the asterix, this option is more efficient, because it allows the thumb to play the accented note.



Example 78. “November,” mm. 14, with inserted fingerings in left hand

For better results, sometimes it is necessary to switch fingers, for example, beginning with 3-4 and switching to 1-3 (Ex. 79).



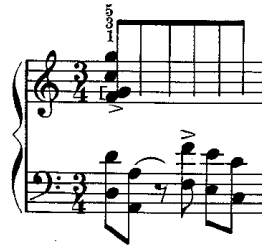
Example 79. “November,” mm. 8., with inserted fingerings in right hand

### “December: Sleighride”

“December” is the longest prelude in *Calendar Collection*. Zaimont uses clusters to imitate sleigh bells while the left hand plays a bouncy, *non-legato* melody. A fast tempo, bright tone, and accented melody describe a joyful mood.

## ***Elements***

The prelude is comparable to a difficulty level of 10. The tempo indicates “Allegro assai (quarter note = 132-144),” and the tonal center is F. Various meters are used with frequent shifts, including 4/4, 3/4, 2/4, 7/8, 3/2, and 9/8. The form is ABA<sup>1</sup>: A (mm. 1-30) – B (mm. 31-48) – A<sup>1</sup> (mm. 49-end). The piece consists of sixty-seven measures, with a performance time of approximately one minute and forty-five seconds. “December” displays thick texture with Zaimont’s use of clusters. The overall range stays in the middle of the keyboard with occasional appearances of the upper register when Zaimont scores using the 8va. The ninth is the largest interval appearing in one hand, designed to play the lower two notes (a second) with the thumb (Ex. 80).



Example 80. “December,” m. 51

## ***Technical and Musical Challenges***

Even if the cluster is a new concept for students, no new technique is necessary. In “December” the cluster is played using all five or fewer fingers rather than other parts of the hand or arm. Clusters imitate the sound of sleigh bells and appear in constant eighth notes. Thus

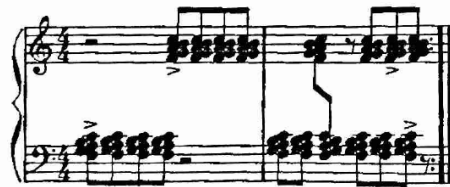
it is crucial to keep the rhythm steady and unaffected by the syncopated rhythms in the left hand. In addition, clusters and chords are repeated, varying from only two to twenty-three iterations. A bouncy and relaxed approach is necessary to convey Zaimont's suggested bright tone, and to finish the prelude without tiring the hands and arms.

On many occasions while the right hand repeats clusters or chords, the melody appears in the left hand in octaves, which may be challenging to perform with accuracy at a fast tempo. When chords are fingered with the thumb playing two notes simultaneously, the student might need practice to become familiar with the technique. Also, playing thirds in step-wise motion might cause difficulty in rendering the *legato* sound simultaneously and evenly.

### ***Teaching Suggestions***

#### *Clusters*

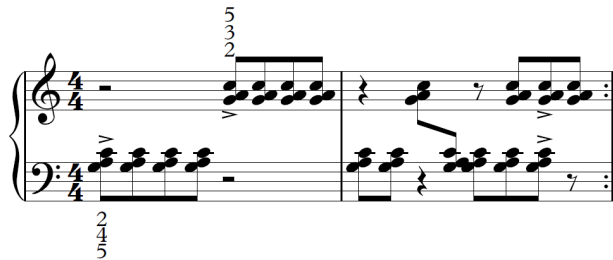
Zaimont gives a preparatory exercise that includes a warm-up in clusters, featuring accents and alternating hands (Ex. 81). This exercise creates good practice for playing clusters or blocked chords with loose wrists. The pattern in Example 81 can be applied to a warm-up with various chords, which repeatedly appear in the prelude as well (Ex. 82).



Example 81. "December," preparatory exercise, mm. 1-2



Example 82-1. "December," mm. 49-50

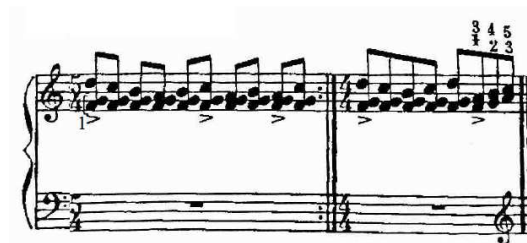


Example 82-2. Pattern of Example 81 using right-hand chord in Example 82-1

### *Thumb playing seconds (both notes)*

Part of the preparatory exercise includes playing chords using the thumb to press two notes at once, while the top notes are moving in step-wise motion (Ex. 83). For students who have never been exposed to the concept of using the thumb on two notes, it would be beneficial to practice first using only the thumb (Ex. 84). Students could benefit from this exercise in Example 83, both in the thumb playing two notes at one time and in voicing the top melodic line. It is also practical to expand Example 83 using intervals up to a ninth for preparation on wider intervals (Ex.85). Various choices of fingerings should be considered to execute Example 85,

depending on comfort. The exercise could be further expanded with the addition of one more note, as seen in the right hand of Example 86.



Example 83. “December,” preparatory exercise, mm. 3-4

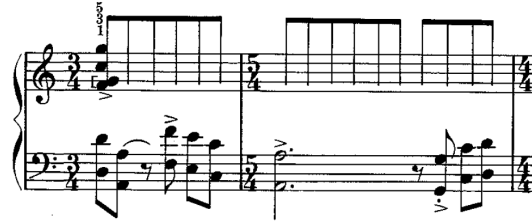


Example 84. Exercise for the thumb playing two notes at once



Example 85. Exercise for wider-spaced chords

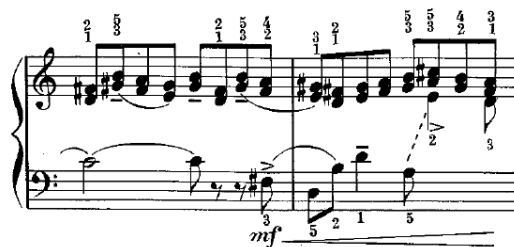




Example 86. “December,” mm. 51-52. Alternative fingerings 1-2-5 can be used if more comfortable

### *Playing thirds in legato*

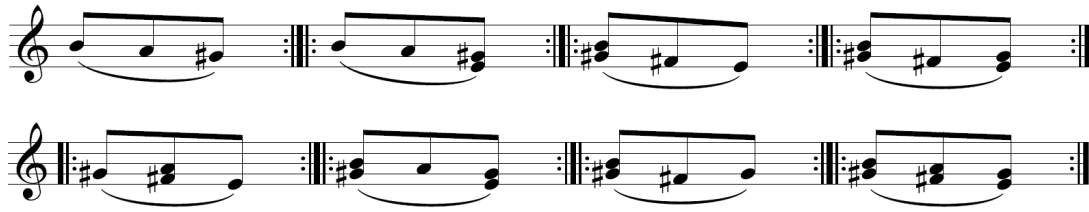
Playing a series of *legato* thirds can be challenging (Ex. 87). For efficient practice, student should divide the passages into small fragments and eventually connect the segments together in order to play the entire phrase (Ex. 88). Because Example 88 requires all five fingers, including weak ones in *legato*, there is a risk that some of the notes will not sound simultaneously. Begin practicing the exercise by playing only the top notes and proceeding by adding or omitting notes (Ex. 89). Each measure should be repeated as needed. When repeating, the student should pay close attention to the wrist movement; the wrist should roll up toward the piano lid.



Example 87. “December,” mm. 29-30



Example 88. Fragment from “December,” m. 29, right hand



Example 89. Exercise for playing thirds in *legato*

## CHAPTER 3

### IN MY LUNCHBOX: SUITE FOR THE DEVELOPING PIANIST

*In My Lunchbox* was commissioned by the Music Teachers Association of California and premiered at their annual convention in July 2003. The premiere featured performances by four eleven- and twelve-year-old students. The composer designed the suite to “invite the young pianist to experience the whole keyboard” with the smaller hand size in mind.<sup>64</sup> Zaimont dedicated each movement to five of her family members: her son, niece, and three nephews.

The work contains of five pieces, organized as three larger movements (*Swimming Tuna*, *The Banana Song*, and *Dessert*), with two short intermezzi (*Celery Stalks* and *Mandarin Orange*) in between.<sup>65</sup> In “A message from the Composer,” in the score of *In My Lunchbox*, Zaimont stated that each movement addresses pedagogical issues, including “studies in touch, growing subtlety of phrasing, control of dynamics and pedaling, and a certain degree of independence for both hands.” In the message, she also encourages students to use their imagination to “bring each food to life” for each piece: *Swimming Tuna*, *Celery Stalks*, *The Banana Song*, *Mandarin Orange*, and *Dessert*. In her message to the teacher, she describes the technical and musical challenges of each piece that students might encounter and remarks on the form used in each.

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<sup>64</sup> Zaimont, “Composer Profile,” *Piano Today*: 10.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

## **“Swimming Tuna (Arabesque)”**

“Swimming Tuna” is the first piece in the set in the “well-balanced musical meal,” as Zaimont describes it.<sup>66</sup> As the tempo marking indicates, this movement should be fast and flowing. Also, the long phrases in this piece require careful shaping, and this will result in effortless and fluent execution.

### ***Elements***

“Swimming Tuna” is comparable to a difficulty level of 6, written in “Loose rondo form in arabesque style.” As “Lightly spinning (dotted half note = 72; dotted quarter note = 144)” indicates, the tempo is fast and flowing. The tonal center is C, and the time signature of 6/8 remains throughout, unchanging.

Principally, four motives appear in the movement. Motive 1 uses continuous eighth notes of two kinds: Motive 1.1 shows a group of eighth notes alternating between the hands (Ex. 90-1), and Motive 1.2 sounds simultaneously between the hands (Ex. 90-2). Motive 2 uses two-note slurs (Ex. 91). Motive 3 uses an eighth-note scalar passage with crossing hands (Ex. 92), and Motive 4 demonstrates written-out trills with the left-hand melody (Ex. 93). There are 120 measures in total, and the performance duration is approximately one minute and fifty seconds. The thin texture appears mostly in single lines for each hand. The distance between the hands is almost always very close, even though the keyboard range that student explores is quite wide. Although rare, the largest interval used in one hand is a fifth.

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<sup>66</sup> Judith Lang Zaimont, *In My Lunchbox: Suite for Developing Pianists*. (Pullman, VA: Vivace Press, 2003).



Example 90-1. Motive 1-1, "Swimming Tuna," mm. 1-4



Example 90-2. Motive 1-2, "Swimming Tuna," mm. 17-20



Example 91. Motive 2, "Swimming Tuna," mm. 12-14



Example 92. Motive 3, “Swimming Tuna,” mm. 23-26

Note: According to Zaimont, “The stemming in this passage simply shows the division of pitches for each hand.”<sup>67</sup>



Example 93. Motive 4, “Swimming Tuna,” mm. 27-30

### ***Zaimont’s Pedagogical Purpose***

Zaimont states that the musical goals include “continuing flow with some changing dynamics, pattern repetition, and some cross-hands.”<sup>68</sup>

### ***Technical and Musical Challenges***

The primary challenges in “Swimming Tuna” necessitate specific skills, including fluency, crossing hands, two-note slurs, and balance. The continuous eighth notes in this piece

<sup>67</sup> Zaimont, Email interview, May 12, 2014.

<sup>68</sup> Zaimont, *In My Lunchbox*.

require a constant flow of sound and fluency, accompanied with appropriate use of pedal and an even eighth-note rhythm. Creating a smooth *legato* using hand crossings requires the player to always place the hands in the next position ahead of time, and to listen carefully for a blended sound without accent. Two-note slurs must be played emphasizing the first note and with accurate rhythm, while the second note should be played lightly. The written-out trill in the right hand accompanies the left-hand melody, and careful balance is required so that the right hand trill does not overpower the left-hand melodic line.

### ***Teaching Suggestions***

#### *Fluency*

Slow practice is strongly suggested in order to achieve a steady and continuous flow of sound. Essential practice to establish fluency includes using variant rhythms for practicing (Ex. 94). Practice that accents different notes helps in playing fast, even rhythms (Ex. 95). Pedal should be added as the student gradually increases the tempo.



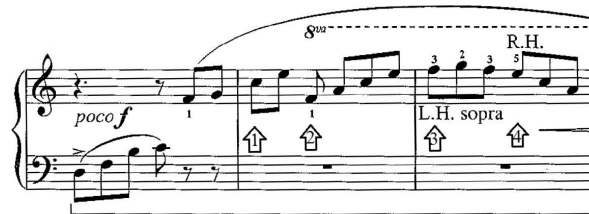
Example 94. Variant rhythms for practice



Example 95. Accenting different notes

### *Crossing hands*

Hand preparation for passages involving the crossing of the hands is a prerequisite for executing a smooth line as well as a *legato* sound. Stop playing just at the point of hand crossing will assist in drilling the hand preparation. For practice, stop at arrows in the Example 96, which indicate the crossing of hands. First, play up to the first arrow, practicing for a quick left-hand preparation. Once the preparation is achieved in a timely manner, move to the second arrow, and so on.



Example 96. “Swimming Tuna,” mm. 105-107, with inserted indications for stopping points

### *Two-note slurs*

In “Swimming Tuna,” most of the two-note slurs appear in the rhythm of an eighth note followed by a quarter note. The two-note slur requires a slight stress on the first note followed by



the softer second note (Ex. 97). Playing the two notes with alternating hands using exaggerated dynamics with an overly loud first note followed by an excessively soft second note will aid in the proper execution of this motive (Ex. 98).



Example 97. Two-note slur, “Swimming Tuna,” mm. 11-12



Example 98. Alternating hands (stress shown as accent)

### *Balance*

Since most students are right-handed and most piano literature places the melodic line in the right hand, many students might need to exert more effort to bring out the left-hand melody in this piece. Initially, the ability to listen to the melody might be improved by playing the left hand alone. It would be also helpful to play the passage as a duet, having the teacher add the right hand, thus allowing the student to hear the all the parts with ease. Once the student is able to listen to the appropriate balance between the hands, the secondary stage would be to play the

right-hand line silently, marking it on the keyboard, along with the left hand melody sounding out loud.

### **“Celery Stalks”**

“Celery Stalks” is the first of two short intermezzi placed between longer movements in the volume. Use of accents and shifting rhythmic meter results in the “sharp and dry” rhythmic sound Zaimont indicates in the tempo marking.

#### ***Elements***

“Celery Stalks” is similar to a difficulty level of 6. The A and A’ sections show rhythmic characteristics, while the B section contains smoother lines. The tempo changes from quarter note = 104-108, *Piu mosso* to quarter note = 116, interrupted by a *ritardando* to *A Tempo* passage. The piece is in the tonal center of E with the feeling of minor, and the time signature remains in 4/4 with brief interruptions of 3/4 and 6/8.

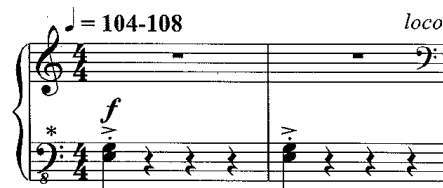
The simple arch form, which might be described as A-B-A’, is balanced with tempo and time signature changes in the middle of the movement. This movement is much shorter than the first (“Swimming Tuna”) in length, with thirty-four measures and a duration of about one minute and fifty seconds. The texture, even though quite thin, is still a bit thicker than that of the first movement, as the left hand maintains a dyad comprising intervals of a third to a sixth for the most part. “Celery Stalks” covers a wide range of the keyboard, although it tends to remain in the lower end. Only once does the left hand play a chord covering an octave, the widest hand interval for one hand in the movement.

### ***Zaimont's Pedagogical Purpose***

For this piece, Zaimont states that the musical goals include playing “precisely rhythmic, with motive, meter shift and fermata,” and “explor[ing] discontinuous sound in the low register.”<sup>69</sup>

### ***Technical and Musical Challenges***

In “Celery Stalks,” the low bass clef is introduced, which denotes playing one octave lower than written (Ex. 99). In this short and fast movement, rapidly changing elements including mood, tempo, rhythm, dynamic and hand position provide students with execution challenges. Shifting rhythms can be problematic to count and play, and students will also grapple with the use of accents and *tenutos* on weak beats. Frequent tempo changes and *ritardandos* might also cause confusion. In particular, smooth and gradual *ritardandos* in both short and long stretches should be well planned out and practiced. A wide range of repeated dynamic changes could be overwhelming and should be included in the initial process of learning the piece. Creating sharp and dry *staccato* and *staccatissimo* is crucial and requires attention.



Example 99. “Celery Stalks,” mm. 1-2

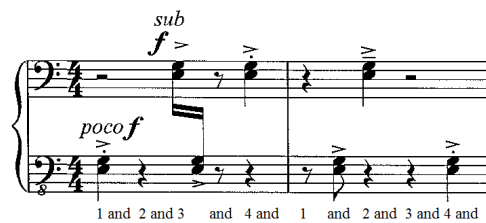
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<sup>69</sup> Zaimont, *In My Lunchbox*.

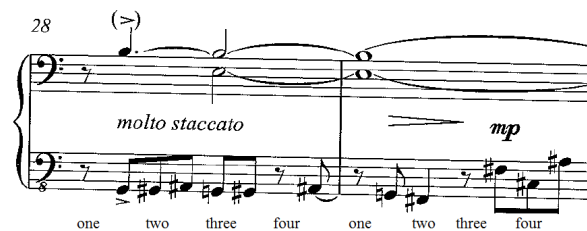
## Teaching Suggestions

### Shifting rhythms

To achieve accuracy in executing shifting rhythms, subdivisions of these should be counted out. In the example below, the subdivision might be counted in eighth notes (Ex. 100). As the ability to perform shifting rhythms improves, the student might begin to count the larger beats without subdivision. In Example 101, counting the main beats is easier.



Example 100. “Celery Stalks,” mm. 6-7, with inserted counting



Example 101. “Celery Stalks,” mm. 28-29, with inserted counting

### *Articulated staccato and staccatissimo*

Articulated *staccato* is one of the primary devices Zaimont uses in this piece to create the mood. In his book, “Mastering Piano Technique: A Guide for Students, Teachers, and Performers,” Seymour Fink states, “Hands and fingers can be combined in such a way that the hands, swinging in the wrists, back individual snapping fingers.”<sup>70</sup> First, the supporting bounce of the hand can be practiced with the five-finger pattern using a metronome. Placing both hands in the C-major five-finger pattern, lightly bounce the hand, swinging the wrist, four times on each finger, and then once on each finger in the contrary motion (Ex. 102).



Example 102. Lightly bouncing hands practice

Explore producing *staccato* sounds by pulling fingers toward the body on each finger. Practice this “pulling finger” *staccato* with bouncy hands on the contrary and parallel motion at the same tempo (Ex. 103). Then repeat this exercise on black keys. As the student becomes comfortable, gradually increase the tempo to a quarter note = 116.

<sup>70</sup> Seymour Fink, *Mastering Piano Technique: A Guide for Students, Teachers, and Performers* (New Jersey: Amadeus Press, 1992), 171.



Example 103. Pulling finger *staccato* practice

Apply this combination of bouncing hands and finger pulling *staccato* into the following excerpt from “Celery Stalks” (Ex. 104).



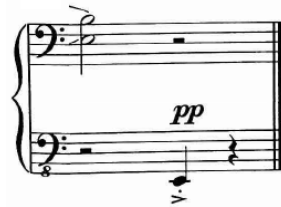
Example 104. “Celery Stalks,” mm. 21-23

## Dynamics

“Dynamic shading is a great art which demands much practice, diligence and a constantly open ear.”<sup>71</sup> In “Celery Stalks,” an especially wide range of dynamic markings, from *pianissimo* to *forte*, appears with frequent *crescendo* and *diminuendo* markings, the latter demanding even more contrast. As dynamic markings are relative terms, the loudest or softest sound will be

<sup>71</sup> Leimer, 105.

different for each performer. Thus, it would be wise to explore *pp*, the softest marking in the movement, and *f*, the loudest. Creating a very soft sound may be more challenging than the loudest sound. The *pianissimo* is produced by setting the fingers on the keyboard and dropping the arm weight gently into the key.<sup>72</sup> The *pp* appears only once, at the end of the piece, accompanying the melody, with a *staccato* and an accent marking (Ex. 105). Keep in mind that the accent should fit within the context of the *pp* marking.



Example 105. “Celery Stalks,” m. 34

### “The Banana Song (Whistlin’ Tune)”

In her note at the beginning, “A message from the composer,” Zaimont asks students to find the rhythm of the word “banana.” The rhythm then appears in the first measure of the movement, and is used throughout the piece (Ex. 106).

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<sup>72</sup> Leimer, 105.



Example 106. “The Banana Song,” m. 1, with inserted word, “banana”

### *Elements*

“The Banana Song” is similar to a difficulty level 8. The movement is in the key of C major, the tempo marking is “Caribbean Lilt (Easily),” and the metronome marking is given as quarter note = c. 76. As the marking “Lilt” implies, “The Banana Song” shows a strong rhythmic pattern, regularly rising and falling. Students are introduced to 5/8 meter with a 2+3 division. Frequent meter changes are used, including 5/8, 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4.

Zaimont uses a theme and variations form for this piece. The theme is presented in two phrases over eight measures. Variation 1 builds up tension with an extended melodic line, followed by Variation 2 in a minor key. Variation 3, the longest, forms the climax of the movement, followed by a coda based on the opening motive. This movement is one of the three principal movements in the center of the *In My Lunchbox*. It consists of forty-nine measures and has a duration of about one minute and forty-six seconds. The predominantly thin texture resembles earlier movements, but there are some areas with dyads and triads.” “Banana Song” uses a wide range of the keyboard and includes the seldom seen marking of *quindicesima* (two octaves higher than written), as well as the more common *ottava bassa* (one octave lower than written). Zaimont organized this piece as “one large arc in hand-body placement: The tune’s first two full statements move from highest treble gradually crossing over the body’s center point; the



third statement is totally in the bass; then there is a final return to traditional placement.”<sup>73</sup> The biggest hand interval is an octave.

### ***Zaimont’s Pedagogical Purpose***

Zaimont’s intention is to have students learn “gentle syncopations, continuing eighth-notes flow from beginning to close,” and to “introduce 5/8 meter, and the idea of visually orienting to the eighth-note to represent the principal symbol for pulse.”<sup>74</sup>

### ***Technical and Musical Challenges***

The initial time signature (5/8) may challenge students who have not previously been exposed to this meter. Even though syncopation occurs frequently throughout, it is expected that the student will learn it without too much trouble by the repetition of the “banana” rhythm. Despite the fact that playing this rhythm with only one hand could be achieved quickly, the complicated part is in playing this rhythm with the other hand, as the rhythms in each hand are independent. It might also be challenging to use the pedal accurately because there are constant changes within short motives or phrases, and both syncopated and non-syncopated pedalings are required.

### ***Teaching Suggestions***

#### ***Syncopation and hand independence***

Since the rhythm of the word “banana” is the underlying motive in this movement, most syncopation in the piece echoes this rhythm. Practicing the rhythm of the word “banana,” even

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<sup>73</sup> Zaimont, “Composer Profile,” *Piano Today*, 11.

<sup>74</sup> Zaimont, *In My Lunchbox*.

saying it out loud, will prove very helpful to the student. Once the student becomes familiar with the rhythmic figure, it is not difficult to play. However, on the first few tries, because of the ties and syncopated rhythm, hand coordination while reading this rhythm across different stresses in the measures or meters might seem difficult to manage. An effective approach to this challenge is to break down the rhythms into smaller segments (Ex. 107). In part, the rhythms prove difficult to play with both hands because of the left hand entrances. When practicing the second and fourth segments, it is best to play these as if they began on the down beat, just like the first and third segments (Exs. 108 and 109). In other words, the sixteenth note remains steady throughout the piece, frequently organized in groups of five.



Example 107. “The Banana Song,” mm. 5-6, with four divided segments



Example 108. Segment 2 as written



Example 109. Segment 2 beginning on the beat

### *Pedal*

In “The Banana Song,” the pedal takes on an important role, creating variety between the different variations of this piece. Frances Clark states that accomplishing good pedaling requires three steps involving fingers, foot, and ear.<sup>75</sup> To begin, the student should practice without pedal until playing is secure. When the pedal is added, the student should listen carefully to the difference in the sound. Make sure pedaling closely follows the markings in the score. Students who can easily execute the non-syncopated pedaling might move on to the syncopated pedal exercise. There are a few spots in the movement that need practice for accurate execution, even for students comfortable with syncopated pedaling. The pedal changes occur quickly, mixing with non-syncopated pedaling.

Begin the syncopated pedal practice at a less complicated spot. The continuous, traditional way of changing pedal for a smooth *legato* sound appears at the end of the movement (Ex. 110).

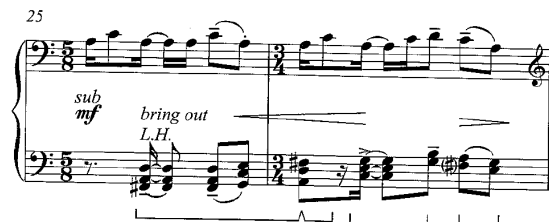
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<sup>75</sup> Frances Clark, *Questions and Answers: Practical Advice for Piano Teachers* (Illinois: Instrumentalist Company, 1992), 148.



Example 110. “The Banana Song,” mm. 43-45

More complicated pedaling is found in Variation 2 (Ex. 111). To master the complicated pedaling, exercises that apply Clark’s three steps (fingers-foot-ear) are as follows. First, once the notes are secure, the student should play the left hand alone in a slow tempo without using the pedal. Second, play the passage using non-syncopated pedaling (Ex. 112). Third, practice with syncopated pedal for each chord, exaggerating the pedal overlapping while listening to the sound difference from the previous stage (Ex. 113). After exploring both non-syncopated and syncopated pedaling, play the first half of the example, left hand only but with pedal, then gradually increase the speed until the student is playing at the stated tempo (Ex. 114). Lastly, add the other measure, playing left hand only with pedal, then play hands together. If the student is struggling to play with pedal, it is more efficient to begin at the first stage of the pedal process as explained above. Students who are more comfortable with pedaling might jump into a later stage.



Example 111. “The Banana Song,” mm. 25-26



Example 112. “The Banana Song,” mm. 25-26, left hand with inserted non-syncopated pedal sign



Example 113. “The Banana Song,” mm. 25-26, left hand with inserted syncopated pedal sign



Example 114. First half of left hand of Ex. 111, mm. 25-26

## “Mandarin Orange”

As the title suggests, this movement describes an oriental atmosphere. It is the easiest in the set and the other of the two short intermezzi, along with “Celery Stalks.” Zaimont specifies that students should learn the “Mandarin Orange” movement twice, first on the black keys, and then on the white. She also indicates that all performances must be played on the black keys.

## ***Elements***

“Mandarin Orange” is comparable to a difficulty level of 4. The tempo marking reads “*Molto Andante*, no faster than quarter note = 96” throughout. Zaimont notes that in this movement the pentatonic collection lies in the tonal center of F on the white keys and F-sharp on the black keys. The time signature remains in 2/4 for the entire piece. It is in binary form, with A and A’ consisting mainly of three-bar phrases. The movement is fifty measures and has a duration of one minute and twenty seconds. It shows a linear texture with a single voice in both hands. “Mandarin Orange” mainly stays in the middle of the keyboard, mostly within two octaves.

## ***Zaimont’s Pedagogical Purpose***

Zaimont calls this movement a “melody study in *legato*,” which should be learned on both white and black keys.<sup>76</sup>

## ***Technical and Musical Challenges***

Zaimont asks that the movement, based on three-measure phrases, be performed “with a breath or break in the *legato*.”<sup>77</sup> Towards the end of each section the phrases expand into longer lengths. Because the *legato* sound is crucial in this movement, it is important to observe the phrases and shape them properly. Fingering may raise a concern for some who are not familiar using thumbs on black keys.

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<sup>76</sup> Zaimont, *In My Lunchbox*.

<sup>77</sup> Rebecca Pennington, “Suite Talk: A Survey of Two Compositions by Judith Lang Zaimont,” (DMA diss., University of Kansas, 2007), 23.

## Teaching Suggestions

### *Legato*

Josef Hofmann states that “a ‘clinging and singing’ gliding of the fingers over the keys” will create a beautiful *legato*.<sup>78</sup> In “Mandarin Orange,” a circling wrist movement supported by the upper arms helps create the smoothly connected sound. Below is Seymour Fink’s suggested exercise to achieve natural arm movement (Exs. 115 and 116).<sup>79</sup> He recommends the student begin with fingers 3-4-5, then move to 2-3-4 and 1-2-3. Once the movement is natural, apply this exercise to the black keys. Then, once the student can hear the *legato* sound and incorporate the arm and wrist movement, apply this technique to Zaimont’s piece (Ex. 117).



Example 115. Seymour Fink’s circling outside movement exercise



Example 116. Seymour Fink’s circling inside movement exercise

<sup>78</sup> Hofmann, 23.

<sup>79</sup> Seymour Fink, 156.



Example 117. “Mandarin Orange,” mm. 1-3, inserted lines show movement and dynamic sign

### *Fingering*

Typically, most pianists refrain from placing their thumbs on the black keys. However, in this movement, the pentatonic scale allows a natural hand position, with all five fingers on the black keys. As a result, the same fingering can be used when playing this piece on the white and black keys (Exs. 118 and 119).



Example 118. “Mandarin Orange,” mm. 1-3, right hand on white keys, fingering inserted



Example 119. “Mandarin Orange,” mm. 1-3, right hand on black keys, fingering inserted



### **“Dessert — Sugar RUSH (Toccata)”**

“Dessert — Sugar RUSH” is the grand finale of the set. It covers a wider range of the keyboard than the other pieces, introducing new elements including *una corda*, *tre corde*, and *accelerando*. Zaimont describes the title as referring to the performer’s favorite dessert, which will “close out your meal in high style and leave you energized and ready to go.”<sup>80</sup>

#### ***Elements***

“Dessert — Sugar RUSH” is comparable to a difficulty level of 7. The A sections are based on a two-note slur motive, agile and rushed with sudden pattern shifts. Section B is more sustained and equable. The movement holds to a B-flat tonal center, although the ending is in G major. The tempo marking indicates “Brightly Pulsing,” with a metronome marking of half note = 120–132. As the tempo marking implies, the pace is steady until the accelerated ending. The form is a *toccata* in a large AABA form. The meter moves back and forth between 2/2 and 3/2. The piece consists of 114 measures with a duration of about two minutes. “Dessert — Sugar RUSH” shows both chordal and linear textures. This piece covers most of the keyboard, except for the outermost octave on either end. Again, as with the other movements in the set, the biggest hand interval does not exceed an octave.

#### ***Zaimont’s Pedagogical Purpose***

Zaimont wrote that “Dessert — Sugar RUSH” features “rhythmical aspects with discipline required in playing *a tempo*,” and requires “digital dexterity plus good control of pedaling and dynamics.”<sup>81</sup> The pedagogical purpose of this composition is to introduce *una corda*, *tre corde*, and *accelerando* to the student.

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<sup>80</sup> Zaimont, *In My Lunchbox*.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

### ***Technical and Musical Challenges***

Some of the technical challenges of the movement include playing brilliant and fast passages steadily, using two-note slur patterns. An additional challenge is that of moving the hands from one position to another very quickly. Use of a wide range of dynamic signs, from *ppp* to *ff*—and various markings including accent, *tenuto*, *sfz* and *sffz*—appear throughout, sometimes in a sudden manner. These sudden shifts in articulation make the control of dynamics more difficult. In addition, Zaimont has provided descriptive words such as “delicate,” “explode,” “grand,” and “very grand” in conjunction with dynamic signs to help create a certain theatricality.

Achieving these performance goals, including playing chords with a big sound, or a repeating single note with a soft sound, requires the proper touch. Students who have no experience using *una corda* should practice using both the *una corda* and damper pedal until hands and feet coordinate. *Accelerando* is a similar concept to *ritardando*, except in reverse, although the former is usually introduced much later in teaching. In this particular movement, *accelerando* will be easier to manage because the passage is repetitive, growing increasingly faster with each repetition. However, proper introduction of the terms and performance practices is necessary.

### ***Teaching Suggestions***

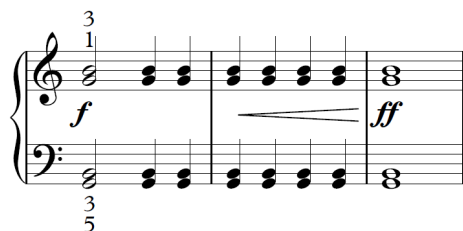
#### ***Chords***

The easiest mistake to make when playing chords is to use a stiff wrist or tensed arm, or both. In order to create deep and powerful sounds when playing chordal passages, the pianist

must have loose arms.<sup>82</sup> Because this piece requires the student to play triads in both hands at the *forte* level, the ending of “Dessert — Sugar RUSH” makes an excellent pedagogical excerpt for practicing chords. Begin with a drill to practice with a single note in the middle of the keyboard until the wrist and arm movement become natural (Ex. 120). Each time, play the note with the fingers moving forward as they press the keys down, with a flexible wrist and elbow moving slightly outward. After a few tries, play with a *crescendo* and notice that as the sound gets louder, the key stroke becomes faster. Once the arm movement is spontaneous, practice with dyads and triads (Exs. 121 and 122). Practice these exercises in the middle register, as this is the most natural posture at the piano. After these drills, play the actual excerpt from “Dessert — Sugar RUSH” in the correct register (Ex. 123).

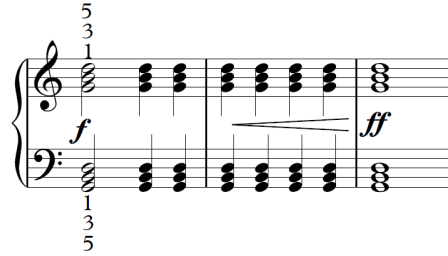


Example 120. Exercise with single notes

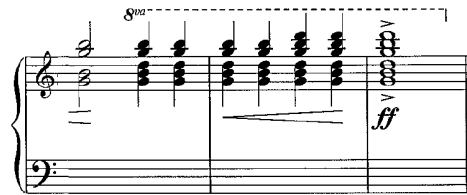


Example 121. Exercise with dyads

<sup>82</sup> Hoffman, 12.



Example 122. Exercise with triads



Example 123. “Dessert — Sugar RUSH,” mm. 110-114

### *Delicate touch*

Playing the left hand in Example 124 requires a gentle touch. The difficulty is in playing repeated notes fast with an even tone. The velocity with which you depress the key largely determines the volume of sound from that keystroke. When creating a soft sound, the speed of the key descent should be slow, but enough to strike the hammer to sound with minimum speed. Leimer gives the advice of “not permitting the fingers to leave the keys with each lift,” for a successful soft sound.<sup>83</sup> Thus, playing from the keys should be practiced in controlling the fingers for even tone. To develop control, first begin with a one-finger exercise using fingers from 2, 3 to 4 (Ex. 125). Students can also practice this same exercise using fingers 1 and 5.

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<sup>83</sup> Leimer, 110.

Once the student gains control of using one finger, have her practice the passage switching fingers (Ex. 126). Again, some other finger combinations might be practiced. After mastering these exercises, choose fingerings that work for the student in performing the actual excerpt from “Dessert — Sugar RUSH.”



Example 124. “Dessert — Sugar RUSH,” mm. 52-55



Example 125. One-key finger exercise with left hand using one finger



Example 126. One-key finger exercise with left hand, switching fingers

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION

Certain solo piano works in the common practice period have become popular and favorites of piano teachers. Although these well-known and established pieces remain pedagogically rewarding and fulfilling, teachers must also look to new, unexplored repertoire for their students in order to escape too much repetition and provide a foundation in performing modern repertoire. Much contemporary music from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries remains virtually new territory for piano teachers and should be added to their repertoire lists. However, this music can sound relatively unappealing to younger students unfamiliar with modern musical language. Moreover, much modern piano music requires large hands and a certain amount of physical strength to perform; thus, the introduction of contemporary music is often postponed until later phases of student learning. *Calendar Collection* and *In My Lunchbox* show that contemporary piano music can be accessible and enjoyable for students.

Both *Calendar Collection* and *In My Lunchbox* were written for developing pianists, providing pedagogical lessons for different levels. *Calendar Collection* is suited for students in Levels 6 to 10—those who can reach an octave—while *In My Lunchbox* is approachable for younger students with smaller hands, in levels 4 to 8. These sets of character pieces have the advantage of stimulating students' imaginations as they acquire techniques also encountered in other repertoire. Students are encouraged to visualize the mood and the character of the music being performed based on the descriptive title of each piece in both sets. Techniques that are acquired in these pieces lie in various areas, including dynamics, articulations, balanced voices,

and fluency. In addition, students are able to encounter contemporary techniques including unusual meters and meter changes, chords in nontraditional contexts, unconventional chord progressions, and clusters. With these skills, students can employ common techniques for better performance on any piece and improve their comfort with contemporary styles.

Suggested difficulty levels and technical challenges for each piece will help teachers to select appropriate pieces for their students. Once a piece is assigned, teachers might apply a particular teaching suggestion for certain difficulties a student encounters, as each piece provides solutions for different challenges. For example, balance between the hands is discussed only in “Swimming Tuna,” even though it appears in the other pieces as well. Thus, the teacher might refer to teaching suggestions from other pieces, as these might address a student’s needs.

Teaching and learning *Calendar Collection* and *In My Lunchbox* will benefit both teachers and students. Teachers will be able to expand their teaching repertoire by including pieces from the modern era. In addition, each piece teaches techniques that are useful in both preparing students for other repertoire and filling technical deficiencies.

When learning these sets, students will have the pleasure of performing music written by a living composer. Students might feel more connection to the music knowing that they would be able to speak to the composer about the music they have been learning, and that will be interesting and motivating. Students will find it fun to play music that reflects their daily life and experience, and this personal connection to the musical content may help them more readily grasp the concepts.

Ideally, this study will encourage teachers to use these pieces as stepping stones to more advanced works. *Calendar Collection* and *In My Lunchbox* allow students to find the joy of

contemporary music in the earlier stages of learning. In addition, the author hopes that this study might inspire other musicians to study pedagogical works of living composers worldwide.



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