

Pianorama Notes
Level 5
Holly Kessiss, Conductor

I'm so excited to get to work with all of you again for our 2023 Pianorama concert! Please follow the suggestions below to prepare for our first rehearsal. Following tempo markings, dynamics, and articulations throughout your practice is essential!

Opening Night (Kevin Costley)

Tempo: 132 beats per minute for the quarter note. I will be conducting this in 4 and will give you 4 beats before we start.

General: To keep this really light and rhythmic, pay close attention to the articulation of the offbeat chords. They should be precise and bouncy so we stay together. This goes for whenever you have the melody as well, which usually starts on an upbeat. It's easy to be late with that eighth rest (ex: m. 6 in the primo part, m. 14 in the secondo part), and in order to sound like one big voice we have to be very exact. I'll cue you! The B section starting at pick-up to m. 21 should be slightly softer. Make sure to pace your dynamics at the end (mezzo piano, mezzo forte, then big forte finish).

Primo: You have the melody at pick-up to m. 5, m. 21, and m. 28. Keep your phrases light and legato to contrast the secondo's funky accompaniment.

Secondo: Your melody comes out at pick-up to m. 13, and m. 37. Pay attention to the different voices you have in your melody part, as the notes with the stems facing down should be softer.

Londonderry Air (Melody Bober)

Tempo: 60 beats per minute for the quarter note. I will be conducting this in 4 and will give you "1 and 2 and 3" before we start.

General: I want to hear beautiful flowing melody phrases, with careful attention to the high points of each phrase and tapering off at the ends. This phrase shaping is often indicated in the music with the composer's crescendos and diminuendos to help us. There will be a slight ritardando at the second half of m. 24, and bigger ritardandos at m. 36 and m. 43. Keep an eye on me for pacing! M. 37 is played "broadly" meaning the tempo is slightly slower for that line, so we will be rehearsing that transition thoroughly to stay in sync.

Primo: Keep your sixteenth notes nice and light in the first full measure, m. 16, and elsewhere. I find that rotation and bigger movements help me to stay consistent.

Secondo: You have some beautiful spotlight melodies in this piece! Make sure your RH shines while your LH stays soft to still provide accompaniment. We will be doing a molto ritardando for the second half of m. 36, but if you need to you can play one bass note each for the sixteenths in the LH instead of octaves.

Hungarian Dance No. 5 (Johannes Brahms)

Tempo: 108 beats per minute for the quarter note in the A section, and 132 beats per minutes for the quarter note in the B section (starts at m. 49). The score suggests slightly faster for each section, and we can try to ramp up the speed if possible in our second rehearsal, but as long as we are lively I am satisfied with the former tempi. I will be conducting this in 2 and will give you 4 beats before we start the A section (at the beginning and at m. 77). I will jump right into the B section on beat one with no upbeat so watch me!

General: The trickiest part of this piece by far is staying together for the quick tempo changes, so keep your eyes on me in any place where “poco rit.” or “in tempo” is written. Please make note of these spots in your score and we will go over them in depth in our rehearsals. It is also helpful to listen to a recording of the duet to hear where those tempo changes occur.

Primo: Make the melody dramatic with the crescendos indicated in m. 9, 25, and so on. Also observe any of the (often offbeat) sforzandos, which add a lot of style to this iconic piece. If you need to skip any fast rolled chords in the LH such as in m. 51 and 54, please let me know so we can coordinate.

Secondo: The RH should generally be light (more of a mezzo forte) and you should put more emphasis on the big bass accompaniment notes in the LH. This keeps the beat steady, and playing out the tonic and dominant notes is important! As with the primo part, if you need to skip any fast rolled chords in the LH starting at m. 49, please let me know so we can coordinate, as well as the octaves in the section at m. 33.