

Pianorama 2025
Level 3B
Conductor's Notes

General notes

- ❖ HERE IS MY MOST IMPORTANT ADVICE as you work on your music:
Even if you learn your pieces so well that they are memorized, keep your eyes UP on the music as much as possible and practice glancing up above your music frequently to check in with the conductor. Only look down at your hands when necessary and then get your eyes back up to the music! This will help our rehearsals run smoothly as we start and stop different sections of each piece as well as become a more cohesive group with tempo and phrasing.
- ❖ Practice being able to start at many different sections/phrase beginnings in each piece.
- ❖ Pencil in measure numbers for all pieces! This will save you time in rehearsal.
- ❖ Learn the conducting pattern for the 4/4 time signature.
Take turns with your teacher/partner conducting each other so you know what each beat looks like.
- ❖ When you practice your part, sit on the left or right side of the bench and leave space for your duet partner even if you are sitting alone – this will become extra important for Upside Down Tango when you switch parts with your partner!

The Circus Ringmaster

- ❖ This will be our opening piece! Energy will be high and we will be tempted to play faster than mm = 92 (not 100 as listed).
 - Practice with the metronome so you can be at mm = 92 consistently (with the exception of m. 20 *ritardando*)
 - BONUS if you practice this piece both faster (like mm = 100) AND slower (like mm = 80) for extra control.
- ❖ Articulation:
 - Distinguish between staccato dots vs. dotted rhythms.
 - Notice where there is NOT a staccato marking and adjust (like Secondo m. 3-4 and m. 28 for both parts)
- ❖ Balance:
 - Often the melody is in one hand with an accompaniment in the other (like Secondo m. 6-11 and Primo m. 1-5, etc.) Regardless of the dynamic marking, never let the accompaniment part overshadow the melody.
 - Always be aware when you have the melody and bring it out! Play everything else more lightly.
 - Secondo starts with an accompaniment in m. 1-5. Put a little emphasis on the LH bass line and keep the RH offbeat chords light and short.
- ❖ *Ritardando* m. 20: I think it will make things easier to get rid of the Secondo 8th note at the end of the measure and place a brief fermata on the Primo beat 4 with a cut off cue for everyone. It will give us a moment to re-set and start m. 21 together for a strong finish. You will need to be able to watch so we stay together here!

Upside-Down Tango

- ❖ A tango is a dance; it can be dramatic but never heavy. Stay light on your toes – I mean fingers!
- ❖ mm = 116
 - Practice with the metronome to make sure your rhythms are precise, especially dotted notes and syncopations.
- ❖ Secondo:
 - Keep staccatos clean and light. Learn the articulation carefully.
 - Be precise with the LH tango accompaniment pattern (dotted quarter-8th) – feel beat 2 and watch your teacher conduct this for you so you come in exactly on time.
 - Follow the dynamic changes, but never play over the melody when you are the accompaniment.
 - Shape your counter melody – diminuendo m. 12 to end the phrase with the Primo
 - m. 22-26: practice this part carefully! There is a lot going on in this section as you complete your metamorphosis into the Primo part.
- ❖ Primo:
 - You have the melody a majority of this piece. Sing out the melody and give shape to the phrases.
 - m. 3-4, 12, 19-20 diminuendo to end the phrase.
 - m. 6, 8, 10, 14 you have two half notes in a row, play the second one more gently.
 - m. 26-27 you have a diminuendo that goes to a *f* dynamic – work on this carefully!
 - Make sure your articulation is clean and precise.
 - Balance: sometimes you will play the melody in one hand the a chord or accompaniment line in the other. Make sure the melody hand sings out and the accompaniment hand plays more softly.
 - Mm. 23-26: count and listen carefully for your next entrance as you get up and move around to the Secondo side.
- ❖ Page turn suggestions:
 - p. 1: Secondo can turn with RH, or Primo can drop LH at the end of the page to turn
 - p. 2: Primo can drop LH A to turn at m. 29

Turquoise Skies

- ❖ mm = 112 (not 126 as listed)
 - Practice with a metronome and watch carefully for cues during the *ritardando* at the end.
- ❖ Sing out the melody when you have it (Primo RH m. 3-10, Secondo RH m. 11-17, etc.).
 - Make sure all other accompaniment parts stay underneath the melody in volume.
 - Shape the phrases – beat 3 for the melody in m. 4 (Primo) and m.12 (Secondo) should be softer than beat 1.
 - Primo: you will need to be especially careful at m. 11-18 to stay softer than the Secondo's RH melody. Listen carefully.
- ❖ We have a big character change in m. 19-20! Observe dynamics, articulations, ties, and rests very carefully.
 - Secondo: I found the fingering suggestions for RH m. 20, 22, 26, 28 to be very helpful – try them!
 - You may be tempted to keep your eyes on your hands to make sure you are jumping to the correct chords during this section. By the time you tape your audition video, your eyes should be mostly on the music and your hands should be finding the chords independently. We will get off track very easily if everyone is not able to watch the conductor during this section.
- ❖ Secondo – pedal carefully.
 - You have a lot of legato pedal but there are also places where the pedal cuts out during rests starting at m. 19.
 - You will need to pedal for the Primo at m. 46 while you are holding the tied whole notes.

Yankee Doodle Variations

- ❖ This is our finale piece for the group – it should be jaunty! (Lively! Cheerful! Confident!)
- ❖ mm = 112
 - Practice with the metronome!
- ❖ The staccato accompaniments with rests (Secondo m. 1-6, Primo m. 7-10, etc.) will sound sloppy if they are not totally together.
 - Keep the notes light and bouncy, stay close to the surface of the key.
 - There are often staccatos in one hand with a legato melody line in the other – maintain the articulation for each hand.
- ❖ Know where the melody is at all times and which hand plays it!
 - There are many places where the melody changes parts from measure to measure.
Work with your partner to make sure the melody is always clear and all accompaniment parts are supporting underneath.
- ❖ Pay attention to dynamics – there are some sudden changes from measure to measure.
 - Even with the louder dynamics, accompaniment parts should not be heavy.
- ❖ Pedal: make sure releases are clean m. 29, 51-53.
- ❖ Watch out for the 2/4 bar that was snuck in at m. 28.
- ❖ **TYPO ALERT:** Secondo m. 38, beat 1 LH should be a Bb. Mark your score if yours is missing!

I look forward to working with Level 3B this fall!
Rachel Mills