

# GRADUATION PROGRAM LISTENING POINTS -- PIANO

REVISED 2019

## PREPARATORY LEVEL

Twinkles - Shinichi Suzuki Tempo: Quarter note = 69-72

- 1) Good posture
- 2) Proper seating height
- 3) Good clear tone on both staccato and legato sounds
- 4) Natural finger movement using the pads
- 5) Hands above the keyboard

Allegro - Shinichi Suzuki Tempo: Quarter note = 116-132

- 1) Ringing, staccato tone in the RH, using "Down-Up" technique
- 2) Gently detached, rhythmic LH chords
- 3) Shaping of phrases, particularly in B section

**LEVEL I** Minuet 2 - J. S. Bach Tempo Range: Quarter note = 120-132 *Repeats required.*

- 1) Sense of  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter in each hand (deeper tone on beat 1 and lightest tone on beat 3)
- 2) Shaping the phrase of m. 1-2, with biggest tone on high G and quiet repeated lower G's. Same on similar 2-measure phrases.
- 3) Balance of hands together (L.H. is melodic but quieter than R.H.)
- 4) Accurate triplet rhythm (m. 15 and m. 23)
- 5) Clear and even 8th-note passages in each hand.
- 6) Suggested dynamics in B section

**LEVEL II** Sonatina. Op. 36 No.3, Spiritoso - Clementi Quarter note = 100-120  
*Repeats optional*

- 1) Sense of C meter in each hand (most emphasis on beat 1 and secondary emphasis on beat 3)
- 2) Clean, even scale passages
- 3) Balance (very quiet, yet rhythmic L.H. accompaniment)
- 4) Ornaments — clear, light tone; measured trills
- 5) Dynamic contrast
- 6) Voicing of R.H. two-note and three-note chords

**LEVEL III** Partita No. 1 in B flat - J. S. Bach *ALL Repeats required, Minuets and Gigue*

MINUET I Tempo: Quarter note = 120-138

- 1) Sense of  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter (especially in L.H.)
- 2) R.H.: singing tone of melody notes vs. light non-melodic tones
- 3) Natural shaping of ascending and descending melodic lines (e.g. m. 5-8)
- 4) R.H.: m. 16, 25, 32: even and light 16<sup>th</sup> notes

MINUET II

- 1) Voicing of R.H. chords
- 2) L.H.: accurate, overlapping note values
- 3) Appoggiaturas on the beat
- 4) Steady beat, at a tempo at or close to Minuet I

GIGUE      Tempo: Quarter note = 120-152

1) Rhythmic accuracy:

- a) L.H. melody in C meter
- b) R.H.: light, even eighth-notes in each triplet pattern
- c) Mordents (m. 5 and m. 7) clear and light

2) Natural shaping of phrases

3) Pedaling – Optional.

**LEVEL IV Sonata No.48 in C, 1<sup>st</sup> movement** - Haydn Half note = 69-84 *Repeats optional.*

1) Rhythmic accuracy:

- a) sense of cut-time meter
- b) clear differentiation between note values: dotted-eighth & sixteenth note, vs. triplets
- c) triplets - even, clear and rhythmic (with slight emphasis on first note of each triplet)

2) Balance: clear differentiation between melody and accompaniment, as characteristic of the the Classical style

3) Articulation: crisp finger staccato, as in phrase 1

4) Ornaments:

- a) Grace notes - crisp and light
- b) Turns and trills - clear, light tone

5) Dynamic contrasts that communicate the drama in the piece.

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**The following levels incorporate many Listening Points from previous pieces – see Bullets below:**

**LEVEL V Sonata K. 330, 1<sup>st</sup> movement** - W. A. Mozart Quarter note = 54-60  
*Repeats optional.*

- 2/4 meter;
- very light, yet rhythmic, LH patterns;
- clean, even scale passages and arpeggiated figures;
- groups of four 16<sup>th</sup>-note patterns against LH triplets; and
- dynamic changes/contrasts.

In addition, pay careful attention to the following three areas.

- 1) Solid, steady beat - maintain tempo through the rhythmic changes, e.g., m. 25 to m. 26
- 2) Rhythmic accuracy - exact duration of rests, from 32<sup>nd</sup> to quarter rest value
- 3) All ornaments on the beat, as characteristic of Classical style.

**LEVEL VI Sonata K. 331, 3<sup>rd</sup> mvt.** - W. A. Mozart Quarter note = 112-126  
*ALL Repeats required*

- 2/4 meter;
- very light, yet rhythmic, LH patterns;
- clean, even scale passages and arpeggiated figures;
- groups of four 16<sup>th</sup>-note patterns against LH triplets; and
- dynamic changes/contrasts.

In addition:

- 1) R.H. octaves - ringing tone with clear, rhythmic pulse

- 2) R. H. broken octaves - light tone
- 3) L.H. arpeggiated ornament, m. 25 -32 and similar measures, and R.H. rolled chords (last section) - clear tones; ornamental notes lighter than main notes.
- 4) Clean pedaling, not deep or over pedaled

**LEVEL VII** Italian Concerto. 1<sup>st</sup> movement - J. S. Bach Quarter note = 88-104

- 1) Accurate note values within contrapuntal style, e.g., first L.H. chord, hold full value; also, see: m. 7 and m. 28-29
- 2) Dynamic changes as notated
- 3) Melodic shape or direction within melodic sequences, e.g., m. 14-21
- 4) Ornaments - evenness and clarity, e.g., m. 112-114

**LEVEL VIII** 1st mvt. of a Beethoven Sonata or similar length representative Romantic work, such as Chopin's Fantasia-Impromptu, or a Schubert Impromptu

- 1) All of the above, as listed before Level V, plus an appropriate stylistic interpretation.
- 2) Performance should communicate the character of the piece and the overall expressive effects.