EYE TUNES

MARK TANNER

PIANO BOOK 7

GRADES 7 — 8

Spartan Press Music Publishers Limited
Strathmashie House, Laggan Bridge,
Scottish Highlands, PH20 1BU, UK
Tel: (01528) 544770 Fax: (01528) 544771
E-mail: mail@SpartanPress.co.uk
Web-site: www.SpartanPress.co.uk

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FOREWORD

The *Eye-Tunes* concept is clear-cut: a series in eight volumes comprising one hundred newly composed piano pieces, grouped broadly in line with the conventions of the principle examination boards.

The pieces within each volume follow a musically viable order, rather than a technically progressive one, so as to encourage profitable dipping! An overall style might be a little tricky to pin down – light, certainly, but not exclusively extrovert, jazz or pop motivated. Indeed the aim throughout has been to dovetail upbeat and humorous pieces with reflective and ambient music that might appeal to the more serious-minded youngster or adult. As the title of the series, Eye-Tunes, suggests, this is music that needs to be read conscientiously — just as if it had come from an earlier time period — and then set free from behind the dots on the page.

There is no desire to dampen an instinct for improvisation, although chord symbols and other direct invitations to go 'freestyle' are not to be found anywhere in the series. That said, many of the pieces sound best when allowed a degree of flexibility that is not always feasible to indicate in a score. In music the hardest thing to notate is 'feel', yet paradoxically this is where the pianist needs to be especially surefooted – no performer sounds less convincing than one who hedges his bets in order to minimise the risk of offending, so come down confidently on the key decisions. Here are a few clues to getting the most from these pieces.

• No element affects musical character more than tempo; moreover, nothing makes more sense of tempo than rhythm. When the chemistry between these is good, success is firmly in prospect.

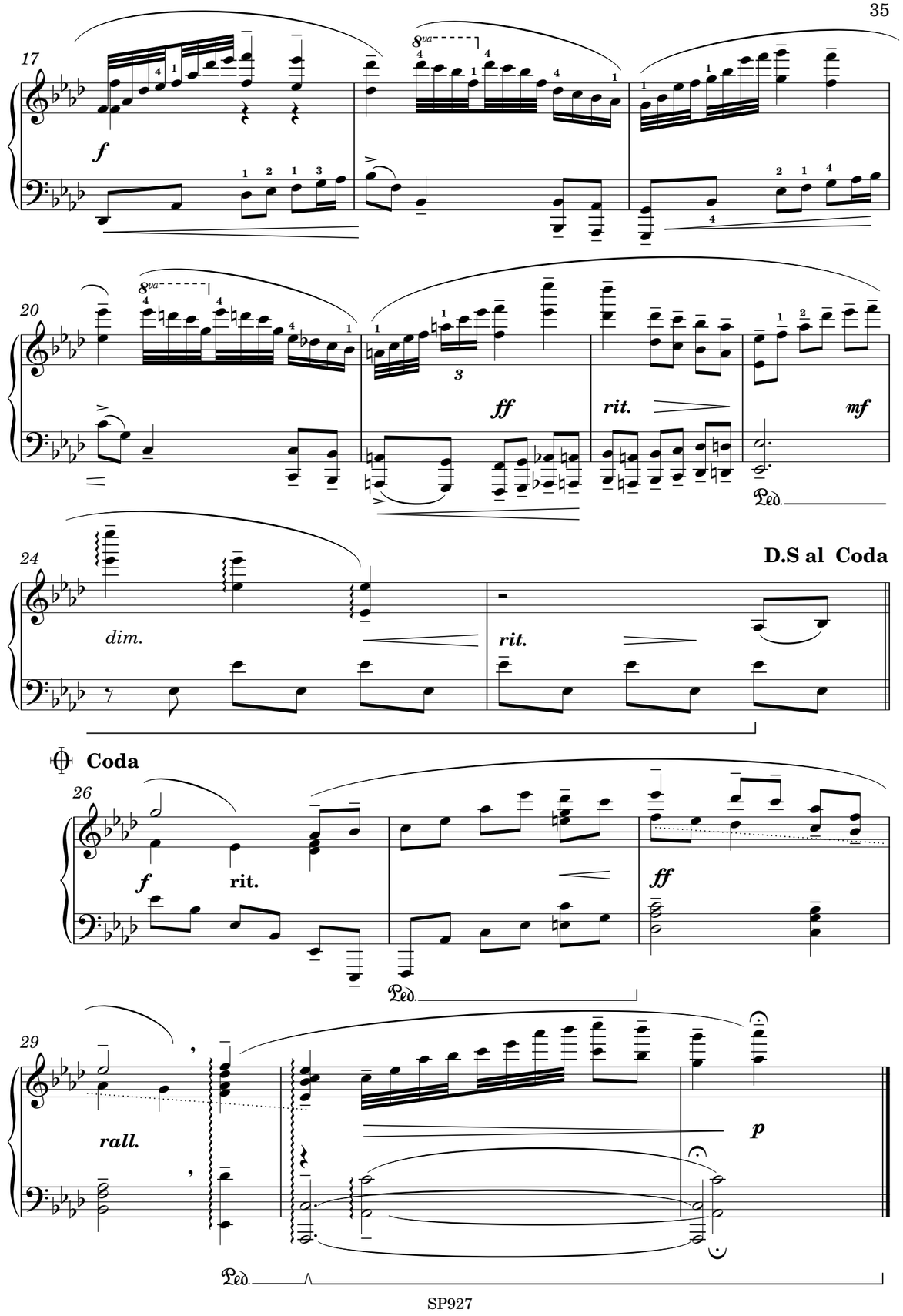
• That said, don't feel hidebound by metronome suggestions, which are, in the main, more healthily regarded as a moveable feast than engraved in stone. Buoyancy is often perfectly achievable at a more sedate tempo provided the rhythmic detail is kept clear. Bear in mind that the enclosed CD is intended to illustrate a plausible interpretation – emphatically not to indicate a definitive tempo, nor indeed to put forward an 'ideal' performance.

• Resist the temptation to 'park' at bar-lines, especially when playing expressively, and assess the appropriateness of a final slowing-down in light of the context (actually, quite a few of the brisker pieces contain a cautionary 'no rit.' direction in the closing bars).

• Swing rhythms are occasionally placed within a 12/8 time signature, but in the earlier grades particularly it has sometimes seemed less fussy to present the score in 4/4 and attach a suitable instruction. Actually, most accomplished jazzers play what amounts to an off-beat accentuation of fairly 'straight' quavers or semiquavers, rather than a literal dotted or triplet rhythm.

• Phrasing, or 'shape' as it is often referred to, is the undulating landscape, the ebb and flow vital to the music's personality, without which the listener's interest is unlikely to be sustained. Ironically, revealing musical shape is far from easy at the piano. It needs to remain an ever-active ambition, for only when the pianist is assertive in carrying the momentum towards (and then away from) peaks of intensity will shape truly emerge as it might more naturally from a singer, violinist or flautist. Interestingly, for all our talk of tone-colouring and expressiveness, from a prosaic scientific standpoint pianists have but two elements with which to work: dynamics and tempo.

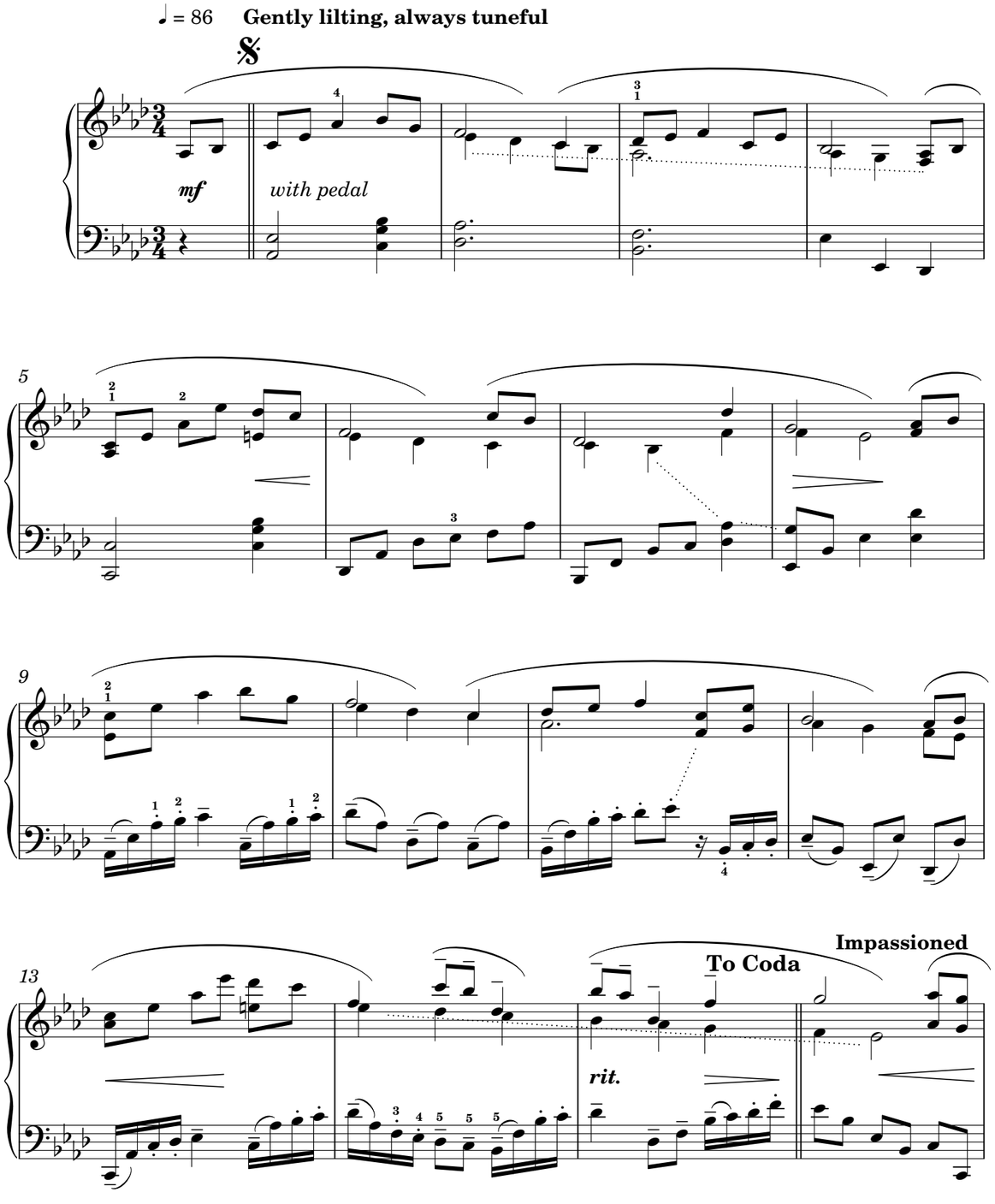
• As an afterthought to the above point, it is often a good idea to fix a 'goal' in the more romantically orientated pieces. In other words, choose a particular moment (a chord, even a single note) that seems to be central to the whole piece based on all the 'clues' that are scattered about en route. After all, this is the stuff of 'interpretation' – a



for Giles Salter

A TWILIGHT CROONER

Mark Tanner



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coming together of the score details and your own instincts to convey the impression of a spontaneous event. Handel would undoubtedly have approved!

• Chord-voicing. Aim to allow every chord (even the humblest C major triad in an accompaniment) its own individuality by choosing one note to bring out over the others. This will often be the bottom or top note, but at other times a middle note, depending on what's either side of it. The jazzier the chord, the more helpful this will be to sustain a feeling of line as you move from one chord to the next. 'Pulling in' the finger in question (i.e. sliding it toward you across the top of the key) will cause it to travel faster, and hence allow it to 'bloom' a fraction more prominently. This can really transform piano playing.

• Pedal indications, which are present from volume one, assume certain capabilities that might not yet prevail; however, judicious finger-pedalling can often alleviate the risk of unwanted mushiness, especially in the more flowing examples. Organists don't have a sustain pedal, but by using finger-substitutions and listening carefully they can convey a convincing legato. Occasionally the marking 'with pedal' is all that is given (and rather more frequently, 'no pedal'), but for consistently pleasing results pedal with the ears, not the foot!

• Suggested fingerings might sometimes raise an eyebrow, but live with them for a while before dismissing them, even when taboos such as thumbs on black notes and repeated fingers are given – jazz and classical pianists routinely break with convention in order to synchronise the fingers and thumbs in chromatic or unison passagework (which aids memorising, too), or perhaps as a pragmatic solution to larger hand-position shifts. Ultimately, if it works, it works. But make sure your fingerings are viable when playing up to the speed you eventually hope to go — remember that running is not fast walking, so take account of a moving wrist or arm.

• The titles of the pieces tend to be colourful and evocative, frequently flirting with the abstruse and occasionally bordering on the downright preposterous (frankly, anything to avoid the starchy yet shockingly ubiquitous 'Prelude in F' syndrome). These are intended to stimulate the imagination and encourage discussion of musical character. Incidentally, all place names — Ventongimps, Trencrom, Goonhilly, Godrevy etc. (Cornwall featuring heavily, I now realise) — really exist, and I must acknowledge Gillian Poznansky for devising a good number of the more imaginative titles, not to mention the title for the overall series.

• Roll up your sleeves and have fun with the music. And if you happen to belong to the ever-expanding swathe of adult pianists returning to playing after decades of involuntary hibernation, remember that a grade three piece played with rhythmic vitality, shape and sensitivity will be so much more impressive at your next dinner party than a grade five piece fumbled-over with fifteen tempo changes, four catastrophic breakdowns and vehement apologies for wrong notes…

• …which leads me to a final (and general) thought regarding the grading of pieces. Teachers sometimes observe that a piece seems rather 'easy' for grade 4, or too 'hard' for grade 6 etc., and this might seem to be borne out by the fact that examination boards can craftily shift their assessment of a piece's difficulty level. Perhaps it would be more constructive to remember that it is the playing that is of a certain standard, not the piece — for it is perfectly possible to hear a diploma standard performance of a grade 2 piece and (thankfully more occasionally) a grade 2 standard performance of a diploma piece.

Mark Tanner

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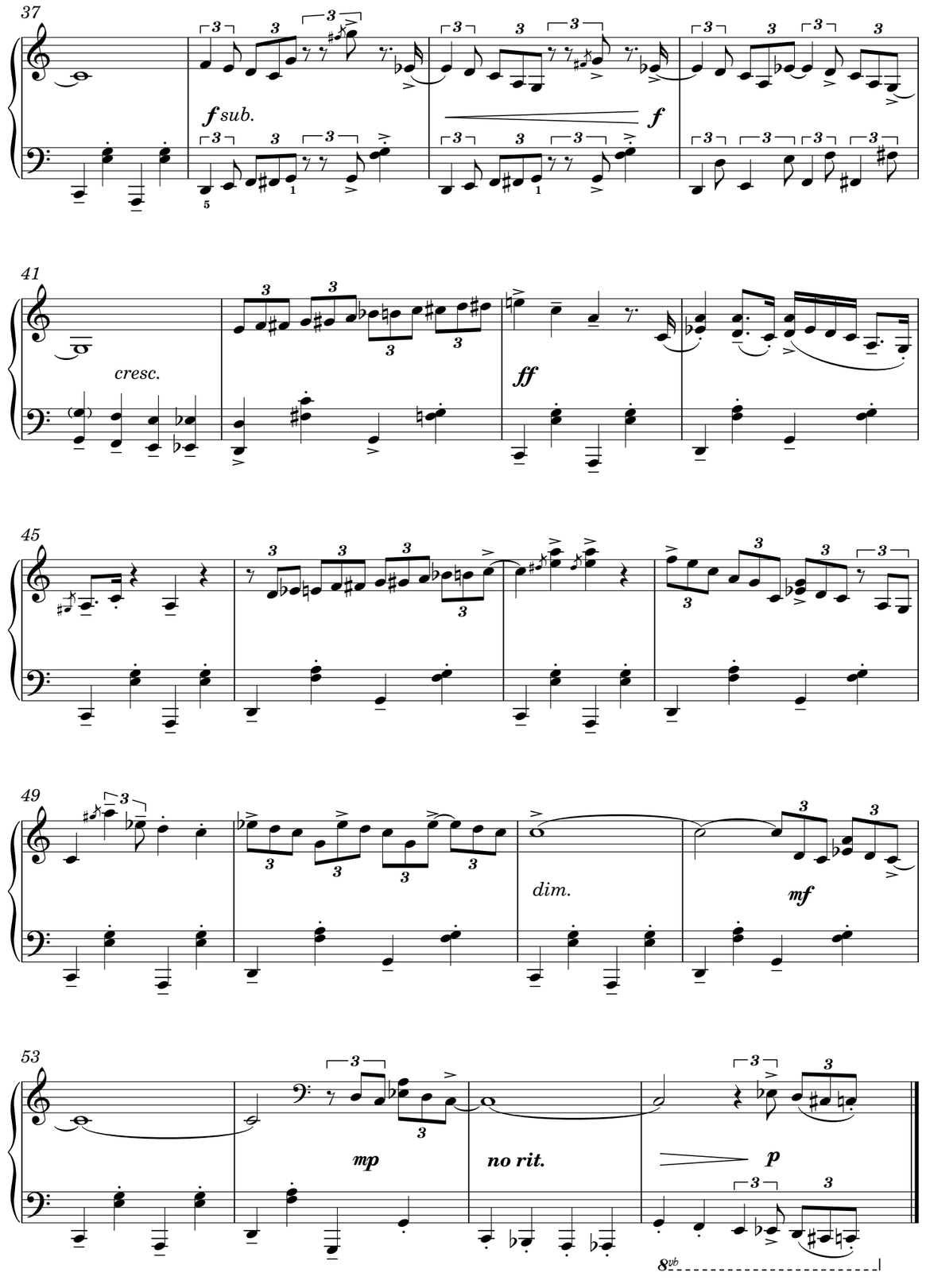

17

cresc.

ff

mf

21

25

f

p

29

f

33

FIBREOPTIC HORIZON

Mark Tanner

♩ = 90 **Always on the move, but never hurried**

mf *dry, but full-toned*

5

f

Ped.

9

mp

f

Ped.

13

mp

f

with dabs of pedal, but hold chord in hand

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16

8va

f

19

8va

mp

f

(pedal as before)

21

23

8va

8va

4-5-4

f

ff

25

mf *(and dry again)*

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

Mark Tanner

♩ = 126 **To be taken at a comfortable stride**

mp

mf

pedal very lightly

5

9

13

f sub.

p

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L.H.

37

Broader

f

ff

D.C. al Coda

42

molto rall.

Coda

46

f

sub. ***p***

8va

8va

Ped.

49

(8)

f

(8)

sfff

ff

Ped.

28

31

34

f

mp

Ped.

36

38

8va

f

mp

40

8va

f

42

44

mp

pedal as before

46

8va

f

dim.

48

8va

rall.

mp

p

Ped.

To Coda

17

f

Ped.

21

25

(no pedal)

29

a tempo

rall.

mp

Ped.

33

R.H.

L.H.

Ped.

GILY'S WALTZ

Mark Tanner

♩. = 66 **Bright-eyed and bushy-tailed**

ff *mf*

Ped.

5

f *mf*

(no pedal)

9

13

f *sub. p*

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INCOGNITO

Mark Tanner

♩ = 160 **With plenty of charisma and rhythmic bite**

mf

(R.H. over)

p *use pedal only to join up L.H. chords*

5

9

f *fff*

13

sub. p *ff*

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17

sub. ***p***

ff

sub. ***p***

sff

8vb

21

8vb

24

sfff

sub. ***p***

(8)

28

(p)

(8)

33

(8)

43

pp

ff

8va

46

pp

ppp

ff

L.H. under

50

p

ff

with extra zeal

8va

53

(8)

fff

Ped.

56

molto dim.

no rit.

(sec)

pp

(and no pedal)

28

8va

p

ff

frenzied

31

(8)

//

34

p

molto cresc.

8vb

Ped.

37

ff

p

(no pedal)

(8)

40

molto cresc.

(white notes)
gliss.

gliss.

(black notes)

8va

ff

Ped.

37

1.

(8)

41

2.

mf

f

(8)

45

sub. p

ff

(8)

49

sub. p

sff

ff

(8)

52

55

p (R.H over)

58

61

64

f

67

no rit.

sub. ***p***

13

16

19

22

25

ff

p *ff*

L.H. under

SPIDER SLEEPS, SPIDER WAKES...

Mark Tanner

♩ = 170 **In the manner of a miscreant arachnoid**

pp *ff*

pedal only where marked

8va

4 *pp* *ff* *pp*

7

10

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RING-TONE RHAPSODY

Mark Tanner

♩ = 160 **Impassioned**

15ma

ff

Ped.

5 *molto allarg.*

♩ = 80

9 *fff*

Freely

13 *sff* *mf* *ff* *p*

Ped.

17

f *f*

♩ = 120 **Ring Tone One** *(cautiously at first)*

21

mf

Ped.

28

mf

8vb

Ring Tone Two

33

f

Ped.

Ring Tone Three

38

p

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8va

Tempo Primo

22

(p) *f* *ff*

A very timid pitter-patter

26

pp *ff*

8va

30

ppp *una corda* *tre corde* *mp* *p*

8va

35

p *(laissez vibrer)* *ff* *p*

Lugubrious, like pendulous drips of acid rain...

37

ppp *una corda* *tre corde* *ff*

8va

Ped.

12

8va

sim.

L.H.

R.H.

ff

Ped.

13

8va

mf *(laissez vibrer)*

14

8va

p

pp

16

15ma

freely

ff

p

ff

20

8va

Somewhat slower and jagged

p

f *(p 2nd time)*

(laissez vibrer)

41

mf

45

Freely

allarg.

f

mp

f

p

Ped.

49

Ring Tone Four

rall.

pp *cheeky*

f

54

p

f

p

f

57

ff

p

f

p

pp

f

Ped.

Ring Tone Five

61 (tr)

quite manic, but even

64

ff ***accel.***

66

ff ***p*** ***ff*** ***p*** ***rall.*** ***ff*** ***sfp***

69 (tr)

more confidently

ff ***mf***

73

mf

ACID RAIN

Mark Tanner

♩ = 120 **Slick and acidic**

f ***p***

L.H. R.H. L.H. R.H. L.H. R.H.

Ped.

3

p

4

p ***ff*** *laissez vibrer*

freely

7

R.H. L.H.

p ***ff*** ***pp***

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42

44

sff

R.H.

8va *15ma*

L.H. ***accel.***

Ped.

sff

♩ = 90 **Tempo 1**

46

long pause

pp *freely*

p ***mf***

Ped.

54

(same tempo)

mp

molto cresc.

sff

Ped.

impetuous, but even

57

8va

ff

(no pedal, and no rit.)

Ped.

77

ff ***mf***

8vb

♩ = 80 **Tempo 2**

81

allarg.

fff

86

pp *(cheeky again)*

90

8va

ppp

ff

(8)

♩ = 160

95

with gusto

senza rit.

gliss.

ff ***sff***

Ped.

THE LIFE-CYCLE OF THE TANNER BEETLE

Composer's Note

As unlikely as it may seem, the Tanner Beetle can be found in British gardens, albeit uncommonly. Its life-cycle conforms to that of other beetle species: egg, larva, pupa, adult...

Mark Tanner

♩ = 90 **Lugubrious, as if in suspended animation**

mf *pp* *p* *mf*

Ped.

♩ = 140 **Swinging and impish**

(Same tempo, but rather capriciously)

9

mp *molto cresc.* *sff* *mf*

Ped.

13

17

f L.H. L.H. *(no pedal)*

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21

p

26

29

mf *f*

32

ff

35

Ped.

mf

39

ff