

At the Piano

The series “At the Piano” is intended for all those who have some experience playing the piano and would now like to play easier original works by famous composers. Students, teachers and those returning to the piano will encounter a wealth of well-known works.

Contents

Each volume in the series is devoted exclusively to one composer. This is because each composer has his own style and thus places his own very personal demands on his piano works – not only from the point of view of technique but also as regards musical interpretation.

Technique

All of the pieces have been arranged in progressive level of difficulty. They enable you to practise very different pianistic skills, including runs, breaking chords, arpeggios, parallel thirds, trills, playing chords and polyphonic playing. Thus most of the pieces also prepare you for more demanding pieces by the composer in question. We have endeavoured to keep variety in mind when compiling the pieces: slower ones follow faster ones, dances come after studies, variations after sonata movements, etc.

Urtext

All of the pieces have been edited according to the strictest Urtext principles, as have all Urtext editions by G. Henle Publishers. In short, this means that the musical text is unaltered and presents the composer’s intentions. Additions that are essential – even great composers occasionally make mistakes – have been given in parentheses. And as we do not wish to dispense with the

aid of fingerings, we clearly differentiate between the ones we have added (in normal writing) and those that are original (in italics). Composers in the Baroque, Classical and even Early Romantic periods were extremely sparing with indications regarding articulation, phrasing, dynamics and tempo. This was because in those days they could assume that experienced players already knew how something was to be played. This might not always be immediately clear to musicians today. Nevertheless, in our Urtext editions we deliberately do without “well-intentioned” additions and questionable alterations, as are often to be found in other editions. Those who use our editions are free of such patronisation; they can be sure of the authenticity of the musical text and make the most of the ensuing flexibility for their own stylistically confident interpretation.

Guide

This cannot, of course, be done without any help at all. The series “At the Piano” provides an introduction to dealing with Urtext editions as well as a first pedagogical guide on how to get to grips with original works of an easy and medium level of difficulty from a technical and musical point of view. To this end, each piece is preceded by some information on practising it, on its history and on understanding the musical text. In so doing we would like to provide players with a foundation upon which they can develop their own approach to the work, their own personal interpretation and above all, enjoy making music. Pianists who are enthusiastic and prepared to put in a little effort – no matter whether young or old, starting to play or returning to the instrument – will then be able to play their Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Brahms or even Liszt with conviction.

Playing Haydn

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) is a fascinating character in music history. Practically the same age as J. S. Bach's youngest sons, Johann Christoph Friedrich and Johann Christian, Haydn succeeded, unlike hardly any other musician, in uniting several styles in his considerable oeuvre, in building bridges and at the same time in developing new ideas. At the end of his long life he left behind an oeuvre that was in many areas innovative and groundbreaking – whether concerning the genre of the symphony, vocal music with the great masses and oratorios, or chamber music. In the case of the latter, the string quartet deserves particular note as one can almost say that it was his “invention”.



Joseph Haydn was a much-celebrated composer throughout Europe during his own lifetime, whose fame even led to his prominent “representation” in a painting by Francisco de Goya (in the form of a printed page of music). Yet during the 19th and 20th centuries his music faded a little into the background or, as was the case with his piano music, was limited to music within the family circle. The nickname “Papa Haydn”, uttered by his contemporaries with complete respect, gradually began to acquire somewhat negative, old-fashioned overtones. Robert Schumann was partly responsible for this denigration, writing in a review of a concert in 1840, “one cannot learn anything new from him anymore; he is like a familiar house guest who is always gladly and respectfully received: but he no longer has any deeper interest for our times today”. Fortunately, this attitude has changed completely and Haydn now once again enjoys the respect that he deserves. It was Haydn who founded and at the same time continued to develop Viennese Classicism and its diverse forms: a master of formal elegance and diversity, of the joy of playing, of musical humour and of sensitive expression. Although many of the works published during the composer's lifetime had opus numbers, only

the ones for the string quartets have survived the test of time. The Dutch music scholar Anthony van Hoboken (1887–1983) must be credited with sorting Haydn's immense number of musical compositions into a new systematic order. He published the *Thematisch-bibliographisches Werkverzeichnis* of Haydn's complete works in three volumes between 1957 and 1978. In view of the difficulty of sorting the earlier works in particular into chronological order, he decided to sort the whole of the composer's oeuvre into genres. Ever since, Haydn's works have been referred to using this catalogue (often abbreviated to “Hob.”), whereby the Roman numerals refer to the group of works (the piano sonatas were given for example the number XVI), and the Arabic numerals to the individual work.



Haydn's music – incidentally as with that of Mozart – only rarely imposes great virtuosic demands on the player. Yet this does not mean that his piano music is easy, but rather requires a more refined art of touch. At the same time, it is not easy to say for which instrument Haydn wrote his piano works. In the autographs and copies of the earlier pieces the instrument referred to is without exception the “cembalo” or “clavicembalo”. It is disputed whether he might have already been writing for the new “Hammerklavier” from the end of the 1760s onwards. He himself only owned one of these instruments at the end of the 1780s. However, in the sources, the reference to “per il Clavicembalo o Pianoforte” already occurs a little earlier, from around 1780.

At all events, the newly-developed instrument, which was technically by no means as sophisticated as the cembalo, clearly influenced Haydn's technique and thus also his style. Of the pieces included in this volume, it is only nos. 5–7 that were intended for the cembalo: but one “may” surely play all of his piano works on a modern piano.