

B:2 Waltz

This is a good piece to choose if you are confident with playing quite quickly in a legato style and slurring from the lower octave to the higher octave; if you are not comfortable with this, maybe consider choosing another piece.

Before starting work on this piece, try to listen online to a recording of the original piano piece, for example <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cwm0vwHC76k> and the saxophone version of this piece https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sqt1o_CUN14 which is also available as part of your exam downloads; use the code in the back of your book to access these.

It may be a good idea to play the D minor scale from page 12 of the exam pack or available from Masquerade Music at <https://www.masquerade-music.co.uk/freemusic.html> to get the feel of the key.

Then start by getting familiar with the notes, initially working in four bar phrases, being aware that each phrase starts on the last note of a bar. The melody (tune) is mainly legato so watch out for where the notes are tongued and aim to play the articulation exactly as written.

If you find it hard to slur up from the low A to the higher A in bars 4 -5, and the C to the higher C in bars 24 -25, it may help to practise some octave hops. First practise your octave hops tongued, and only move on to slurring once you are confident with playing them tongued. Start on low D and play that note followed by high D with the octave key, repeat this several times then do the same on E, then F, then G, A, Bb and finally C. This may take quite a bit of practice so don't worry if you find it tricky!

Next focus on the dynamics. Notice how this is generally quite a quiet piece, starting and ending piano (soft) and only reaching mf (medium strong) at the loudest point. Practise playing softly while maintaining a good tone (sound). Then look at the crescendo / diminuendo feature in bars 4 – 5 and 8 – 9; this is just a little increase and decrease in dynamic (volume) to emphasis the shape of the phrase; see how the volume goes up when the melody goes up the octave. Practise shaping this phrase.

Practise starting the piece by counting **1,2,3 1,2** in your head before you start playing on the third beat of bar 2. Practise the whole piece, trying to think of all the articulation and dynamics. Then when you are confident with that, add in the pochissimo rit (very slight slowing) in bar 18, returning to your normal speed with

the 'a tempo' in the following bar; add in the rit from the end of bar 31 to the end of the piece.

A waltz is a style of fast dance music with three beats in a bar. Using your accompaniment download, listen to how the piano plays staccato chords on the first and second beats and is silent on the third beat of the bar. Maybe try clapping along with this to get the feel of the dance. Try to play simply and sensitively, making your playing nice and light, as if you were dancing!

You could try playing along with a metronome or metronome app, gradually increasing the speed until you can play about one bar per second (crotchet = 180), but bear in mind you will have to ignore the rit in bar 18 and 31 when you do this! Then try playing along with the full version and finally the piano backing; practise.