

A guide to practicing Rondo Olympia by Tom Davoren

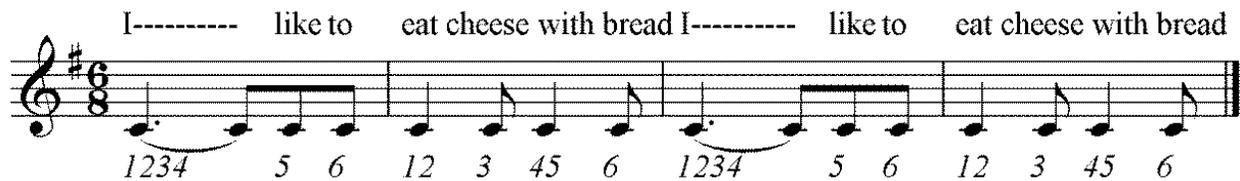
Rondo Olympia by Tom Davoren is a great choice for your grade 3 exam, it's a really exciting piece which shows off your dexterity on your instrument. Before we begin let us look at a couple of general details at the start of the music;

Key Signature – The piece is in f major. You haven't learnt this scale yet, but it's worth warming up by playing a mini – scale based on it see below;



Don't forget the 1 flat, which is b flat sharp on 1st valve/1st position.

Time Signature - The time signature is in 6/8 , with 6 quavers in a bar, grouped into two groups of 3. To get used to the rhythms found in the piece look at the following examples below. First of all say the words given whilst clapping quavers. Then when your confident on that play the rhythms on your favourite note making sure you are still saying the words in your head.



### The First 12 bars

The first four bars are rests; you don't need to practice these when you are playing by yourself but if playing with the backing track or a pianist you will need to count them!

Bar 5 – The dynamic is mf, moderately loud push the air fairly fast down your instrument to get a nice bright sound. It also says *leggerio* underneath which means to play lightly so keep all your notes nice and light and bouncy.

The range of notes are not too challenging in this section, watch the b flats in the key signature, on 1<sup>st</sup> valve/1<sup>st</sup> position. The intervals are not too bad either just watch the octave jumps in bar 11, practice these slowly making sure you drop a whole 8 notes and not hitting the notes in between them. A good way to do this is to play b flat major scale down from high b flat to low b flat and focusing on the sound of the first and last note.

There are also 2 slurs, one in bar 8 and one in bar 12. These are both straightforward but make sure they are there. In terms of phrasing and breathing aim to do this opening in two breaths, take the breath in bar in between the f sharp and d.

The great thing about a rondo the musical form of the piece is that these 8 bars appear two more times can you spot them? There are variations in between them which we look at next.

### Variation 1 bars 17-20

This starts with a nasty leap from a to d. Practice it down an octave until you are confident how it sounds – it should sound like the start of *Amazing Grace*. When you are confident play it back at the original octave.

This section should be practiced very slowly as it's quite tricky, then build up the speed when you're confident with the figuring and slurring in this section. There is a chromatic section in bar 20, with a f sharp on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Valve/5<sup>th</sup> position.

This section is marked mp and so should be slightly softer than the first section.

### Variation 2 bars 33-40

This section is much softer, push the air out slowly. The *cantabile* here means in a singing style, so sing this section through in your practice then imitate this when you are playing. There are two staccato notes in this section, make sure they are nice and bouncy, and should almost feel more like a quaver with a quaver rest after it.

### Top Tips

-Practice the piece slowly at start and then build the tempo up. Start at 50 bpm, then increase by 10 each time you feel you have mastered it up to 90 bpm.

-Overdo the dynamics to make a real difference to an audience

-Perform it to people it at home so you feel confident on it.

-Break up your practice, each session try and master either the first theme or one of the variations and really focus on it. Don't just play from the start and play through it all. Leave this until the end of your practice as a reward for doing focused work.