

B:3 Bye Bye Blackbird

This is a good piece to choose if you are confident with playing legato quavers from low to high; 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 piece, which was written for saxophone <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=djz9N8rMyq0> and which is available as part of your exam downloads; use the code in the back of your book to access these.

Before learning this piece, it may help to play the D major two octave scale that is on page 12 of your exam pack or available to download free from Masquerade Music <https://www.masquerade-music.co.uk/freemusic.html>. If you have not learnt the scale yet, play it slowly while reading the notes carefully, watching out for C# as well as F#. Also play or learn the arpeggio on page 13 of your pack or downloaded from the above link.

Start by getting familiar with the notes, working initially in two bar phrases, and being aware that the quavers are normal 'straight' quavers, not swung. Look for where a phrase repeats, for example the pattern in Bar 1 also occurs in bar 3 and bar 5. Look carefully at the notes, as there are places where the rhythm is the same as something you've already played but the notes themselves are slightly different; compare bar 4 to bar 2 for example, and bar 9 to bar 11.

There are a couple of phrases that may need a bit of extra practice. Practise the upwards and downwards phrase in bar 7, which also appears in bar 15, slowly until you get the notes under your fingers. This is a bit like your D major arpeggio but with an added B! The trickiest place for notes is the long upwards moving phrase in bars 17 – 18, which is like a cross between a scale and an arpeggio! Look carefully and see where the notes move in steps and where they are leaps, and play the phrase very slowly and carefully in groups of four quavers at a time. You will gradually build the fluency and speed as you practise, almost without noticing it! Once you are comfortable with the two bar phrases, join these together to make four bar phrases.

When you are confident with the notes and rhythms, add the articulation. There are many slurs throughout the piece, so notice where it is one long slur such as in bar 1 or two shorter slurs like in bar 2. The two tricky phrases identified above should be slurred in groups of four quavers, with just a light tongue on the second group.

Look for where there are staccato crotchets at the beginning of a bar or staccato quavers at the end of the bar, and try to incorporate these. Finally add the accents, which are used for emphasis, for example in bar 9, by giving an extra push from the diaphragm area (bottom of your lungs). It is also suggested that you give a light accent to the first beat of each bar, although these are not marked, so work on clearly marking the start of each bar with a slight push.

Then focus on dynamics, which are not complicated in this piece. Practise playing the first eight bar section with a good, confident forte. Then drop immediately to mezzo piano for the next section, which only switches to forte again in its last two bars. The final four bar section starts at mp, and grows over two bars, reaching a strong forte again at the end of bar 18 for the last couple of bars of the piece.

Phish and Chips is one of a collection of 'byte-size' pieces for saxophone, all with titles relating to computers! Three composers collaborated on the collection, and this piece is by Karen Street, a British saxophonist and accordion player as well as a composer. This is a fun, happy piece, so try to get that across in your playing. Think of something joyful before you play it to get in a cheerful mood!

You could try playing along with a metronome or metronome app, building up to a speed of about crotchet = 108, (four beats per bar). Then try playing along with the example track provided, and finally on your own; practise both with and without the example track.