

**B:2 Cinq Sets**

This is a good piece to choose if you are confident with playing long flowing phrases with good breath control and octave hops from C on the stave to the C above; if you are not comfortable with these things, maybe consider choosing another piece.

Before starting work on this piece, try to listen online to a recording of it here [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lb5PR3Us\\_as](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lb5PR3Us_as) or listen to the example version available as part of your exam downloads; use the code in the back of your book to access these.

Start by getting familiar with the notes in the first 16 bars, counting **1,2&**, **1,2&** in your head before you start; once you are confident with the notes, pay attention to the articulation. There is a mix of tongued notes and slurred quavers throughout this section, and also some tenuto notes in bars 15 – 16, so make sure you give these their full length.

Then get familiar with the notes in the next 16 bars, (bars 17 to 32). This is a contrasting second tune, with notes in the lower register and some additional slurred patterns. Watch out for the G# in bar 20 and G natural in bar 21, and the C# in bar 26 and C natural in bar 27. You may need to practise the low C# in bar 24 on its own before joining it on to the other quavers before and after. (If you're not sure about low C#, you put your right hand little finger on the other flat key, just to the right of the one it normally sits on, in addition to all the fingers you use for low D.) Once you are familiar with the notes, again pay attention to articulation, making sure that you do the tongued and slurred notes as written, including slurred pairs of crotchets and slurred dotted crotchets to quavers.

Look at the next section and you will see it is almost the same as the first section, except the tune starts with a crotchet upbeat at the end of bar 32 instead of a quaver upbeat at the very beginning of the piece, so make sure you make these two upbeats different to each other. (Remember an upbeat is where the music starts before a bar line rather than at the beginning of a bar.) After 12 bars of this tune, there is a different ending, with lots of tied notes. Practise this ending from bar 45 to the end, making sure that you are playing all the tenuto notes long. You may need to practise bars 49 – 50 without the slur first, then add it in, and finally try the whole phrase from halfway through bar 48 to halfway through bar 52.

When you are confident with all of that, pay attention to the dynamics, which mainly lie in the middle range with markings of *mp* and *mf*. The main tune in the first and third sections should be *mp* with no variation from that; the contrasting

second tune has a stronger dynamic, starting at *mf* and then increasing via a crescendo in bar 24 to *forte*, before going back down to *mp* with the diminuendo across bars 31 – 32. In the end section, crescendo up to *mf* in bar 45 – 46, then again up to *forte* in bar 50. Halfway through bar 52, change to *mp* without a diminuendo, then diminuendo from bar 53 to the end.

Then work on the phrasing and breathing. You will see that there are breath marks shown as a tick, where you should always breathe, and other breath marks shown as a tick in brackets, which are optional additional breaths. Always breathe deeply, from the bottom of your lungs and control the air carefully as you play, supporting and pushing the air from the bottom of your lungs. Try breathing in all the marked places, and if you have good breath control and find that easy to achieve, you could try missing out the optional breaths. Bear in mind that exam conditions may affect breathing and breath control, so it is useful to have those extra places to breathe!

Aim for a speed of about crotchet = 104, (two beats per bar), so practise until you are confident and fluent at that speed. The instruction 'Sans trainer' in bar 17 means 'without dragging', so make sure you stick to the same tempo that you played the first section at throughout that second section. There is a pause on the final note of the piece, so make this as long as feels comfortable to finish the piece on a quiet, sustained note.

The piece is one of a set of two by the contemporary Parisian composer, flautist and teacher Guy-Claude Luypaerts. *Cinq Sets*, or *Five Sets* in English, refers to the maximum length of a game of professional tennis, such as is played at Wimbledon. The regular accompaniment in the piano and the sometimes unexpected harmonies seem to reflect a game of tennis being played out. Try picturing a game of top level tennis or watch part of a Wimbledon final on YouTube to get in the mood!

Once you have got the piece to the right speed, try playing along with the full version in your exam downloads and finally the piano backing; practise.