

# Lento e Teneramente by Adolphus Hailstork

## Grade 5 list B

### Overview:

This soulful and beautiful piece is a joy to play. Here are some ideas that would come up when I study this piece with a student in a lesson. *Lento e Teneramente* means slow and tender. Be careful how slow you take it because stamina can be an issue in this piece, particularly for small people. I wouldn't go slower than the suggested dotted crotchet = 44, even if tempted to.

### Rhythm and 6/8:

Some less experienced students can find 6/8 time confusing so I would explain how 6/8 works and write a few bars of 6/8 rhythms at the top of the page to illustrate and revise the concept. I would get them to clap it and I would play a bit with them to get them in the 6/8 groove, I would extend this to some copycat exercises on the bassoon using one note, before moving onto call and response, with them improvising a response to my call. Some role reversals are also great fun, with your student playing the call. This can then be developed to include notes from the piece.

I would encourage a lot of practice with the metronome. It's good to think of the piece as 2 in a bar, subdividing where necessary, fully supporting all and every semiquaver with the diaphragm. In fact, the diaphragm support needs to be intense for every single note in this piece, and the student must push lots of air through the instrument to help make it sing the lovely lines.

### Breathing and Preparation:

Always prepare any piece with one or two bars silent of preparation before starting, counting the pulse of the piece in your head. Help your student decide which beat to breathe on before playing. I often write the counts in at the beginning, with an arrow pointing to where we've decided to take the breath. This can vary from student to student. We sometimes try out several options and decide which is most comfortable, write it in and stick to it. Here, the beginning of the first bar in the rests is the obvious choice. I use this kind of approach to the general breathing in the piece. It would be good to make long lines. Many students would breathe every bar, so I ask them not to breathe until the end of bar 4. Smaller people need to breathe more often.

### Stamina Challenges:

Because this piece is tough on stamina, I would mark a few out breaths before the in breaths. Like an oboist, you breathe fully out through the mouth before breathing in. I mark them with circle "O" and the in breath with a "V", so for example I would mark "OV" at beginning of bar 17 - OUT IN - in quaver rhythm. Something similar would happen in bar 21. After the pause on low D (preferably not played sharp in pitch) I would suggest taking a bit of time to exhale and inhale, take a natural pause in the music – this means that the player can recover (and the audience have a breather too, to put them at ease). I would take longer after the first G in bar

36 with an out breath as well as in, and take a bit of liberty with this to ensure the player (particularly a small person) has enough poise and stamina to control the ending of the piece and hold a gorgeous low G for the full length. The breaths all need practicing so that they are the same consistently every time. After the last low G, the player shouldn't move at all and keep the pose for a few seconds to hold the magic of the piece for a bit longer.

Try to hold all notes for their full value, e.g., in the first bar there's no gap between the Bb and A - the diaphragm pushes air right through the phrase and the tongue very gently articulates the line.

### Dynamics:

There are lovely dynamics in the piece which need exaggerating. I love the echo effects in bars 17- 24, really enjoy these fully. A responsive reed is needed for these and to get a fabulous low D at the end of bar 27. Scrape the reed around the tip and tramlines if needs be, to improve response.

### Vibrato:

You can colour and warm the tone with vibrato in some areas. It's a good idea to introduce little bits of vibrato exercises into lessons and I sometimes do this well before grade 5 if the student is producing a good sound. I don't make a big deal about it and it's important to also be able to play without vibrato. One exercise I use is to say "huh huh huh huh" using diaphragm, like a laugh, then try on one note. Don't use your throat or lips. You do these "huh huhs" at different speeds and rhythms and a bit each day with a metronome to control and vary the speed. I sometimes do vibrato exercises alongside the student, following me through different rhythms and speeds of "huh huh huhs". Short spells of vibrato practice are a good idea. It feels unnatural at first, but students will gradually find their diaphragm knows what to do and they can do a good vibrato as and when needed, but not all the time.

### Articulation:

Articulation is all very gentle with a very soft "du" rather than a hard "t" smacking the reed with the tongue. Note the *tenuto* in bars 17 to 24 which can be nudged out with a diaphragm push.

### Grace Notes:

The grace notes are *appoggiaturas* and not too fast, each little note supported by the diaphragm and not swallowed. You can tuck them onto the beat. I suggest this fingering for the top Eb to F: finger top Eb and lift index and middle finger left hand to get the F.

### Intonation and fingerings:

Accurate use of the thumb vents and crook key give a much more pleasing and cleaner result. Watch that the G's are not sharp, left hand pressing down the top pinky (or bottom if better) helps the middle G not stick out. I like the left-hand top pinky to be used on all notes from top F and above. Go easy on the C# at the end of bar 24, be aware it can be a weak note on some instruments and sink in pitch. I suggest adding top left-hand pinky and low D key to mute and tune the F# in bars 20 and 36. I would encourage older students to use front F# in bar 27, it's

slightly flatter and more blended on most instruments, but not all. More mature students might try a low Bb key to help their low D.

I often write out fingerings of the more complex higher notes in the margin as some students forget them most weeks. For example, in this piece for some people I would write out a top G diagram at the side of the page. (Remind them to put on the crook key!)

### **Conclusion:**

These are just some of the ways I would teach this piece and certainly not the only way to do it. For most students I would introduce these ideas gradually over several lessons, although you might get the odd one who can take it all in at once. I hope you have found some useful ideas here. Thanks for reading this and happy bassooning!