

The Wayfarer by Gwilym Simcock

ABRSM Grade 8 Jazz Piano

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Software for keyboard images- Chordio for mac



The Challenges

1. Key changes

2. The Improvisation

3. The Rhythm and
coordination

Key Changes

The Keys are linked to the thematic material in the music. It helps to see the form of the music as they link to the key changes.

The music is in a kind of loose rondo form with the B section as the returning melody in various guises and keys.

Intro A B C B D A solo B A B D coda.

The music has sections with no key signature, 5 flats (Bb minor), 4 sharps (C# minor) and 2 flats (Bb major). Often the no key signature is used because the music moves frequently between chords that are not diatonic and it's easier to read notated this way. The Bb minor sections are often based on the natural minor scale and don't have the raised 7th (A naturals). The section with 4 sharps is more like a G# minor Phrygian tonality than a C# minor one. This is due to the dominant 7th preceding the key change in bar 82. The final Bb section although has many non diatonic chords does finally come to rest on a peaceful Bb major chord in the final bar.

The Intro and other sections with no key signature

This has no key signature. The piece starts firmly in Bb minor but quickly moves away with a series of chords and a descending bass line to come to rest on a chord marked Fm7. This is commonly known as F7sus4 and here the effect is like a dominant 7th chord without the 3rd to lead us to the A section in Bb minor.

There is a brief section with no key in bar 27-31 and again this is due to the non diatonic harmony.

The section I have called 'D' at bar 39-51 is also repeated exactly as bar 108-119. These sections are best understood if you look backwards from the start of the following section. In bars 51 and bar 120 the music modulates to Bb (minor in b51 and major in b120). The chords leading up to this are II V I with some harmonic decorations. The sections begin with a F#7sus4 chord and through a series of chords lead to the II V I.

Sections A, B, C and coda

Sections A at bar 9-12, 51-58 are in Bb (natural) minor and have a rocking theme. There is also a hint of A at the end of bar 95-100.

Sections B at bar 13-21 (B1), bar 31-38 (B2), bar 83-94 (B3) and bar 100-107 (B4). The first and last B themes (B1 and 2) are in Bb minor with some block chord ideas. The middle B2 is in G# minor (Phrygian mode). This is the 3rd mode of the major scale (derived from E major).

The C section at bar 21-27 is never repeated and is still in the key of Bb minor. It could be seen really as an extension of the B1 section before it. In the C section we go from a chord of Db (relative major of Bb minor) through a series of chords. The movement to Bb minor in the B2 section in bar 31 comes after an abrupt stop on a C minor chord.

The Coda is in Bb major in bar 120 and although ends with a strong chord the section is abundant with harmonic variety and non diatonic chords. Note there are attractive harmonies in the chord sequence going through the cycle of 5^{ths} (from D to G etc.) from bars 133 to the start of 135, and the chordal movement feels very natural.

The Solo section and the Coda improvised sections

The Solo sections are based on modal harmony mostly. The start is on an F7sus4 chord which functions as a dominant 7th chord but after this much of the harmony is not functional (such as II V I etc).

In this context you can mostly think of every chord as having its own identity and scale. The suggested notes are in the treble clef in a box. They are either scales beginning on the root of the chord or cells of notes that work well. Try and think about phrases rather than scales and write some of your own 'licks' or lines that you can practice and insert when soloing.

Altered scales and Suggested Lick for the end of the solo

♩=166

PIANO

4/4

D7(♯9)

E♭7(♯9)

G♯m11(b6) E.T.C

PNO.

4

D7(♯9)

E♭7(♯9)

G♯m11(b6) E.T.C

WITH DIFFERENT LEFT HAND

ALTERED SCALE- 7TH MODE OF THE MELODIC MINOR
THESE ALTERED CHORDS ARE NOTATED ♯9&S IN THE MUSIC

PIANO

4/4

D7 ALT

SCATONE

SCATONE

SCATONE

SCATONE

SCATONE

SCATONE

SCATONE

PNO.

2

E♭7 ALT

SCATONE

SCATONE

SCATONE

SCATONE

SCATONE

SCATONE

What to consider when soloing

- Have a pre-learnt phrase to start the solo. Even if you don't play it the same each time you will be confident in your improvising.
- Try and play in the style of the music and use pre-existing melodic ideas and textures from the tune.
- Be confident in varying the left hand. Use a mixture of the suggested ideas and maybe chords or roots and guide tones.
- Practice how to finish phrase and connect with the written material, especially in the last section.

Rhythm and coordination

- Loose latin with the left-hand groove and at times the melody often emphasizing the and of 2.
- Note the left-hand pattern in bar 120 where the first beat is a rest. This bass pattern here is like a salsa bass line.
- The coordination at bar 9 needs careful practice It's challenging! Develop a muscle memory and internalize the music. Bar 55 is also difficult regarding coordination - try tackling a bar at a time.
- Always play with a metronome to maintain a steady speed. The final speed of crotchet=166 is quite a fast pace but I would recommend playing the music slightly slower if it means a stronger rhythmic control and a better groove.

Recommended listening

The Wayfarer was written by Gwilym Simcock so a place to start would be listening to his albums:

- Good Day at Shloss Elmau- *These are the Good Days*
- Pat Metheny Trio Live *So it may secretly begin* disc 2 and *James* disc 2
- British contemporary such as Kenny Wheeler and John Taylor (*Azimuth/The Touchstone/Départ -Siren's song*).

Video presented by Andrea Vicari
On the wayfarer written by Gwilym Simcock

Keyboard visuals created using Chordio for Mac
For more information on Andrea go to:

<http://www.andreavicari.com>

<https://www.jazzsnippets.com>

