

JULIAN ANDERSON

Études Nos. 1-3

*for piano*

(1995-8)

FABER *ff* MUSIC

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as part of the 49th Aldeburgh Festival on 22 June 1996

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Total duration: c.14 minutes

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## PERFORMANCE NOTES

### Études Nos. 1 & 2: A note on *the* metre

The metric structure of these studies is such that the implied or 'heard' metre is frequently different from that in which the music, for the sake of clarity and simplicity, is notated. For example, the opening of *Étude No. 1*, if accurately notated, would look like this:



The image shows the opening of Étude No. 1. It consists of two staves of music. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The music is marked with a dynamic of *ff sempre*. The time signature changes frequently: 3/16, 3/8, 4/8, 3/16, 3/8. There are upbeat and downbeat markings over the notes. The piece ends with "etc." on both staves.

The multiple use of upbeat (˘) and downbeat (˙) signs over each hand means that the music can be reduced to a single 4/4 metre, making it much easier to count and to play. The performer should pay close attention to all these accentuation marks which give the music its polyrhythmic life, and make them audible to the listener.

The *Étude No. 2* uses accentuation and metric stress to imply different speeds as well as metres, sometimes within one single line. The metrically vague opening is followed, in bar 9, by a series of short note values strongly implying a 3/16 metre at a much faster speed, viz.:



The image shows a single staff of music for Étude No. 2, bar 9. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 3/16. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 240. The music consists of a series of short note values. The dynamic markings are *mp* and *p*. The piece ends with "etc."

Bar 11 introduces a different metre and speed again:



The image shows a single staff of music for Étude No. 2, bar 11. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 3/8. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 120. The music consists of a series of short note values. The dynamic marking is *p*. The piece ends with "etc."

which is immediately disrupted and followed by yet another (bar 12, beat 3):



The image shows a single staff of music for Étude No. 2, bar 12. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The time signature is 3/8. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 80 (♩ = 240). The music consists of a series of short note values. The piece ends with "etc."

The upbeat, downbeat and other accentuations should be clearly audible so that these momentary fragments of tempo and metre emerge. This is especially important in the passage for both hands beginning at the top of page 7 (at *p subito*).

### Étude No. 3

In the third study the waves of *crescendo-diminuendo* should be clearly differentiated between the hands on the first page. The *poco sf* markings which start at the bottom of that page should not be exaggerated – they are *poco sf* in *pp* and the general dynamic does not rise until the very end of the second system of page 13.

Pedalling: The sustaining pedal is in action throughout the *Étude*. It is only released in the final bar. There are two types of pedal changes:

1. Sudden and total, notated:  $\wedge$
2. Gradual, effected by  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$  raising of the pedal several times irregularly prior to raising it fully:  $\text{~~~~~Ped}$ . The pedal is then redepessed immediately.

*Sempre poco ped.* (see page 15) means the pedal is raised irregularly by  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$  and fully, in order to aid clarity and prevent excessive blurring.

The indication  $\text{~~~~~}$  (see page 18) by itself indicates an irregular  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$  raising of the pedal, which may include raising it fully on occasion if this helps prevent blurring. In such instances, as with the *Sempre poco ped.* indication, the exact details of pedalling will vary according to the piano, the hall acoustic, etc., and they are therefore left to the discretion of the player.

## PROGRAMME NOTES

### Étude No.1 (1995)

This is a short two-part polymetric invention, written for Sally Cavender's birthday. It is centred around the pitch C, with varying amounts of accidentals colouring the modal field.

### Étude No.2 (1995)

This takes as its basic premise the black notes of the piano – that is, the pentatonic mode. This is coloured by varying numbers of white notes, and later on by transposition into many registers of the piano. The rhythmic writing works with the idea of implied metres and speeds, sometimes several in each hand. This piece was the earliest sketch for material which was later used more elaborately in my orchestral piece *The Stations of the Sun*.

### Étude No.3 (*Pour les Arpèges Composées*) (1997-8)

The étude is a double homage to Debussy and to Benjamin Britten. Britten's *Diversions* for piano and orchestra is one of a number of his works employing recurring interval cycles based upon fourths and fifths. Connecting this device in the *Diversions* with Debussy's not unrelated *Étude pour les Arpèges Composées* provided the trigger for this étude, which quotes neither work whilst alluding to both. (This also produced an accidental momentary reference to a Ligeti étude, so that one might add 'und Ligeti ist auch dabei'!) I have employed circles of fourths, fifths, and used both intervals to encircle other constellations of changing modes and harmonies. Both hands are in mensural canon for much of the piece, which results in hemiolas and cross-phasing of the harmonic rhythm. This étude is dedicated to the artist Tom Phillips on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday; a line from his book *The Heart of a Humument* reflects the maritime calm of the music: "By and by, out of the white horizon, the long, low sea."

The piece was commissioned by Stephen Gutman with funds provided by Dartington Summer Arts Foundation.

for Sally C. on her birthday (belatedly)

# Étude No.1

JULIAN ANDERSON

**Presto energico e sempre legato possibile** (♩ = 150)

The first system of the piano étude consists of two staves. The right-hand staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 4/4 time signature. It contains a series of eighth-note patterns with accents and slurs. The left-hand staff begins with a bass clef and contains a similar eighth-note pattern. The dynamic marking *ff sempre* is placed below the right-hand staff.

senza Ped.

*ff sempre*

The second system continues the eighth-note patterns. The right-hand staff features a triplet of eighth notes in the final measure of the second measure. The left-hand staff continues with eighth-note accompaniment.

The third system features a large slur over the right-hand staff, which contains four triplet eighth notes. The left-hand staff continues with eighth-note accompaniment. The dynamic marking *dim.* is placed below the right-hand staff.

The fourth system features a slur over the right-hand staff, which contains eighth-note patterns. The left-hand staff continues with eighth-note accompaniment. The dynamic marking *mp leggiero, cresc. poco a poco* is placed below the right-hand staff, and *mf cresc.* is placed below the left-hand staff.