

### **Étude Op. 72 No. 2 in G Minor**

**Moritz Moszkowski (1854-1925)**

Moritz (Maurice) Moszkowski is a Jewish pianist and composer born in Germany of Polish descent. He is dubbed as a child prodigy and entered Dresden Conservatory at the age of 11. At the age of 17, his tutor Friedrich Kiel was very impressed by Moszkowski and made him an instructor at the Neue Akademie der Tonkunst. In the mid-1880s, Moszkowski suffered from nerves and favour composing, conducting and teaching more. His most famous work is his Spanish dances.

Moszkowski's 15 Virtuosos Op. 72 études is published in 1903. His études explore the different piano technique and are also programmable pieces of music. These études not just help in speed, accuracy, efficiency and strength, it also helps to master musicality, phrasing, voice balance and tone production.

Op. 72 No. 2 in G minor is highly technical. There are many shifts within arpeggios and alternating hands in passagework. The challenge is not only to master the shifts but also to achieve perfect hand coordination, fluency and accuracy with a fast speed. Despite all these technical challenges, this étude is majestic and grand and fun to play.

### **Rhapsody Op. 79 No. 2 in G minor**

**Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)**

Brahms is a German pianist and composer in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. He started learning the Piano at the age of 7 and by 1853, he met Robert Schumann who became his friend and praised him on a famous article. His fame took flight from there.

In 1880, he composed his Two Rhapsodies, Opus 79 which are his largest single-movement works for the piano. These pieces are dedicated to his former student, Elisabeth von Herzogenberg whom he found too attractive to teach her anything and suggested her to study with Julius Epstein instead. At that time, the term "rhapsody" was used by Franz Liszt in his Hungarian Rhapsodies. However, Brahms created a brand new musical meaning for this form in his Two Rhapsodies, Opus 79. The passion of his Two Rhapsodies and the musical images create a dramatic changing of atmospheres through the textures, colour and harmonic changes throughout.

Rhapsody No. 2 in G minor is majestic and virtuosic. It opens with an arpeggiated triad. It has a sonata form and with the transition, the first theme in G minor modulates to its minor dominant (D minor) with a lighter but still plodding second theme. The accompaniment of a rising and falling minor second which is present everywhere is taken from the transitional material. The development begins with many statements of the main theme on different harmonies. Brahms combined the first theme with the second theme's accompaniment figure which requires the pianist to cross hands. This thematic material then dissolves and flourishes as the recapitulation begins which is a repeat of the exposition but the second theme is presented in the tonic instead.

## Étude Op. 25 No. 2 in F minor

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1949)

Frédéric Chopin is renowned as a leading Polish composer and pianist of the Romantic Era. Majority of his works are written for the solo piano. His first composition was published at the age of 7 and he began performing the piano a year later. From then on, he is known as a child prodigy. In 1826, his parents enrolled him in the Warsaw Conservatory of Music where he studied for 3 years under the tutelage of a Polish composer Josef Elsner. In 1829, he made his performance debut in Vienna and the audience was amazed by his highly technical yet expressive performance. He travelled around different countries for the next few years before settling in Paris in 1832.

The Op. 25 Études was published in 1837. It is Chopin's 2<sup>nd</sup> set of études which he dedicated them to his friend, Franz Liszt's mistress, Marie d'Agoult. Each étude has a specific technical challenge presented to the pianist which transcends as a pedagogical purpose, making each étude into an elegant and graceful character piece of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Étude Op. 25 No. 2 in F minor is one of the softer and more lyrical études which Chopin had composed. In this étude, the right hand playing quiet eighth note triplets throughout while the left hand however, is in quarter note triplets which establishes a polyrhythm which makes this piece more difficult.