practice & performance

Introduction

"Sonatina Kansa" was composed following the form of the classical sonatina but relying on a light, familiar-sounding contemporary style for musical color, technique, and harmonic language.

The title is an acknowledgment to the teachers group in Kansas, for which the piece was commissioned. The word *Kansas* originates from the Algonquian term *Kansa* [also Akansa, Akanza], referring to the Quapaw people of the area.

Form

Typically, sonatina form has more flexibility and is less restrictive than sonata-allegro form due to its shorter length, often utilizing only one theme and a brief development section. The Exposition for 'Sonatina Kansa' contains two contrasting themes, the first in E major (m. 1) is identified by repeating staccato triads and hand-over-hand motion using a dotted 16th-8th note rhythm. The second, lyrically flowing theme in C-sharp minor begins at m. 17. After a transition starting in m. 33, the second theme evolves directly into the development of the piece at m. 37. Beginning at m. 45, the material from the previous transition is used to lead into the climax of the piece at m. 52. The Recapitulation appears to begin at m. 53, in E minor, with the RH crossing over this time. The true Recapitulation occurs with the return of E major at m. 61. It is here that the dialogue hand-crossing becomes further separated across the keyboard for enhanced character and color. This is followed by a closing Coda beginning in m. 69 which borrows alternating textural material from both themes.

Technical Considerations

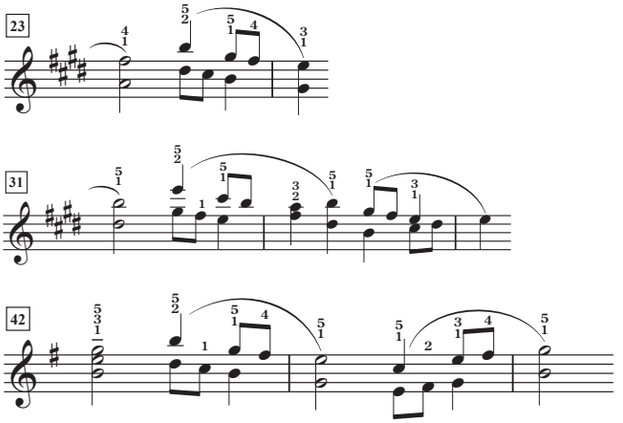
From the outset of the piece the LH crosses over the RH staccato triads to create a dialogue between upper and lower motives. The RH and LH reverse at m 12, with the RH crossing over in preparation for the entrance of the second theme at m. 17. In m. 53, at the false Recapitulation, the RH crosses over—at the Recapitulation in m. 61 the LH crosses over as in the beginning of the piece.

It is important to thoughtfully set the tempo a the desired speed. Base the tempo on mm. 51–52 to ensure that the tempo does not become faster than it can be properly played. The material in the second theme requires a smooth and flowing character which relies on the proper speed to execute effectively.

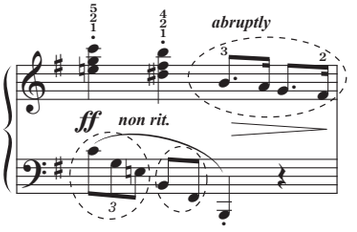
The second theme is identified by flowing triplets. Note the double function that the RH serves in m. 18 as it interplays with the LH to assist the flowing motion of the triplets in the accompaniment. Occasionally duple rhythms appear, as in the RH in mm. 23, 31–32, 40, and 42–43—foreshadowing the LH duplet appearance in the penultimate climax of m. 52.

Observe the low LH half note in m. 18 and a separate color that helps propel the motion as it resolves to the following downbeat.

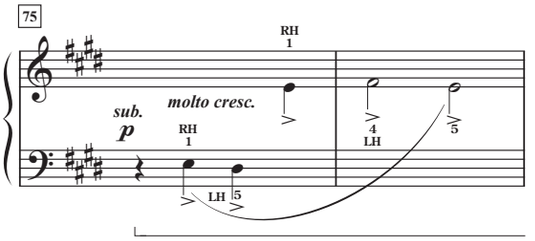
Practice the following passages with a flatter arch to ensure a ***legato*** touch. Sink into the keys for a rich tone color while playing the contrapuntal lines cleanly.



Throughout the piece careful observance of the rhythms is vital to the clarity of form and texture. Dotted 8th-16th (theme one), triplets (theme two), and the contrasting duplets all appear together in a single measure at the climax of the Development in m. 52.



Finally, observe and bring out the underlying melody in mm. 75–76.

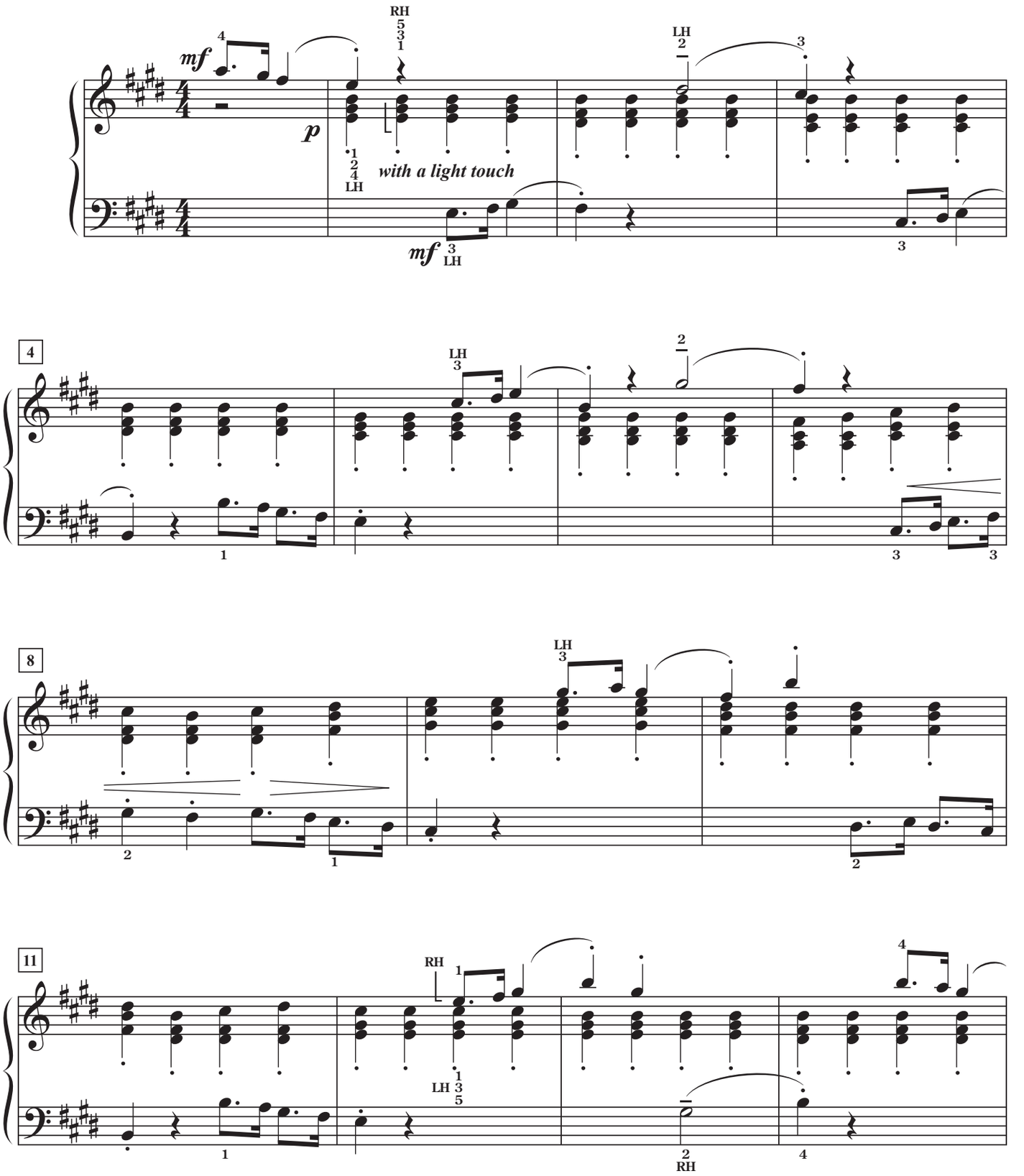


Dedicated to and Commissioned by the
Newton Music Teachers Association, Newton, Kansas

Sonatina Kansa

Tom Gerou

Allegro moderato (♩ = 112–120)



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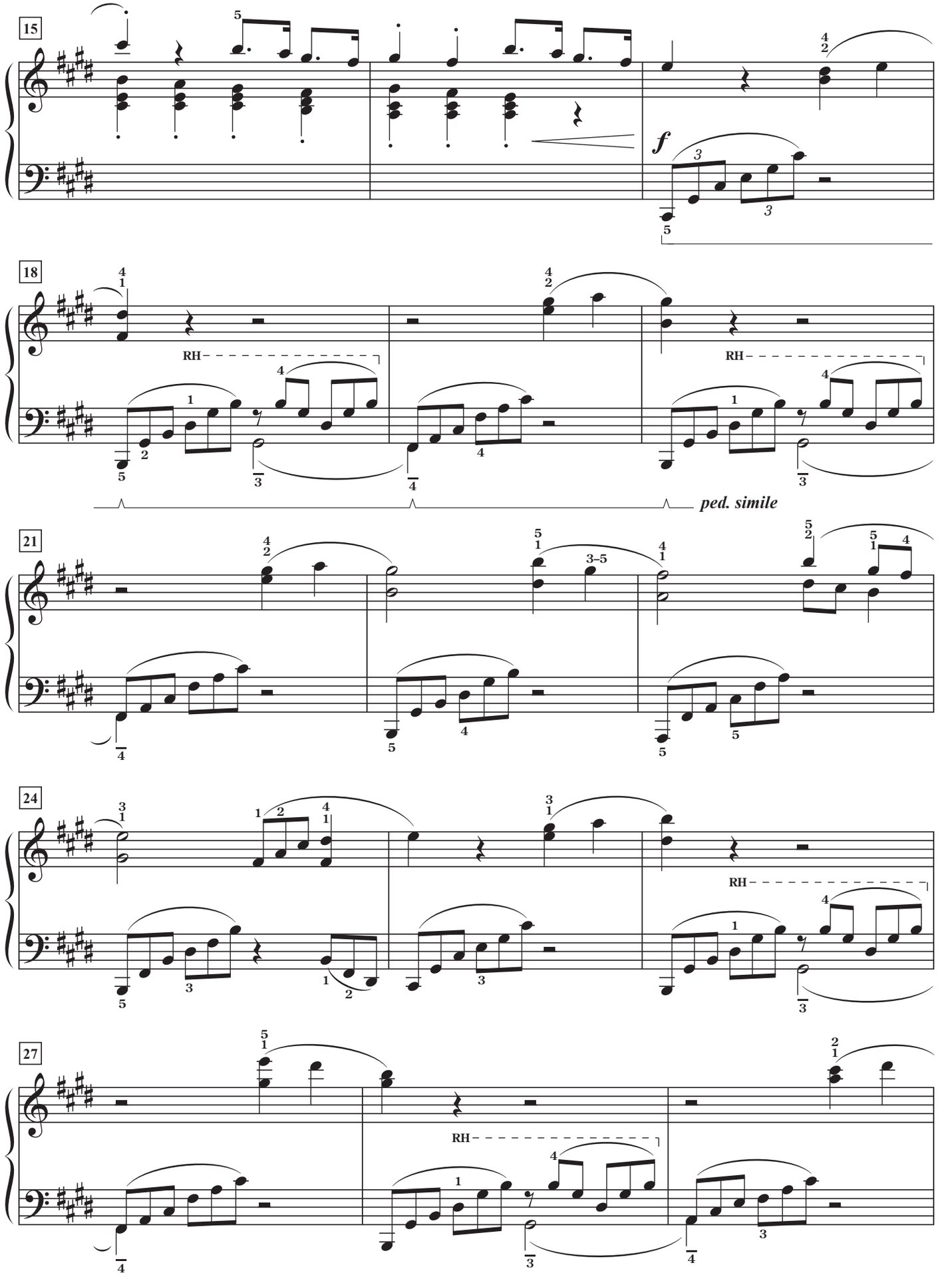
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18
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