

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
(1685-1750)

Musette in D major, BWV Anh.126

A GUIDE TO INTERPRETATION
by Cosmo Buono



This is another delightful composition found in the [Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach](#). In the year 1725, Bach presented his wife with a gift of a book of compositions that he transcribed to aid study of the keyboard for her and their children. It is not clear whether it was actually composed by Bach or by a contemporary. However, it is a wonderful composition in which a student can learn a great deal about technique and an introduction to Baroque style.

MUSETTE

The musette was a form of the bagpipe, and the composition imitates the drone bass of the instrument. It is a sprightly piece, so choose a tempo that will create an atmosphere of energy and joy.

TECHNIQUE

This is a very good study for an advancing student. One of the difficulties of playing a keyboard instrument is playing leaps accurately, and this gives the student practice in both hands at the same time! Learn the piece carefully, slowly, and with hands separately. Start the right hand with the fifth finger, which will put the first two measures right under your hand. Now at the third measure, you need to jump to the F-sharp with the third finger. Practice this very slowly at first, memorizing the physical distance. The problem is that there is no time in between the two notes, as they are both sixteenths. You must learn it so the leap will be seamless. To complicate things, there is at the same time a leap in the left hand. So, learn the left the exact same way, slowly, and memorizing the physical distance between them. At measure 12, the left hand makes the leap from A to E, and use the same method to learn it. After you have the notes and fingering then put it together but again very slowly making sure that you time the leaps correctly, and there is no hesitation. You can do this as slowly as necessary to achieve it. Be sure to move both hands at the same time. The reason is that you do not want to learn a hesitation. It is much preferable to learn it extremely slowly and perfectly, as this is what you will carry with you as you bring it faster.

PHRASING

Generally Baroque composers did not write in phrasing, as that was left to the performer. Baroque Music favors shorter phrases. Phrases in this piece occur naturally every 2 measures. I think measures containing 16th notes such as 1 and 2 and 3, and then 9 and 17 can be played legato, but in the measures with 8th notes I would detach them to create a nice sense of energy and playfulness. Also detach the left hand 8th notes for the same effect.