Chopin – Mazurka in B-flat major, Op. 7 No. 1

AMEB Grade 6 – General Knowledge

1. What does the title mean and how does it relate to the music?

A mazurka is a lively Polish folk dance in triple time, often stressing beats 2 or 3 and using dotted or syncopated rhythms. Vivace means lively and brisk. Chopin transforms the folk dance into an expressive piano piece. Op. 7 No. 1 is the first of five mazurkas published in 1831.

2. What keys are used in the piece?

B-flat major (tonic); F major (dominant, section B); B-flat minor (parallel minor, section C); return to B-flat major.

3. What is the structure of the piece? Point to the sections.

Rondo form (ABACA)

Section A bars 1-24 - Bb major

Section B bars 25-32 - F major

Section A bars 33-44- Bb major

Section C bars 45-52 Bb minor

Section A bars 53-65 Bb major

4. What do the terms and notation mean?

Vivace – lively/brisk

♩. = 50 – dotted-crotchet pulse metronome marking

3/4 – three crotchet beats per bar -simple triple time signature

f / ff / p / pp – loud / very loud / soft / very soft

cresc. – gradually louder

Staccatissimo - sudden loud short note

Scherzando – playfully;

sotto voce – in a subdued ‘under’ voice;

legato – smoothly connected;

stretto – pressing forward;

rubato – flexible timing - rubato means robbed - pay back the amount of time you take away

poco rall. – slow slightly;

a tempo – resume original speed;

tr /ornament – trill;

slur – connected phrase;

staccato dot – detached;

repeat signs and first/second endings – repeat with the appropriate ending;

pedal markings – depress/release sustaining pedal;

grace notes – brief ornamental notes;

Sf - sforzando - sudden loud note

Pedale simile - continuing pedalling in the same way

Mordent - short trill of 4 notes

fermata – prolong note or rest.

5. What period and style is this piece from?

Period: Romantic

Style: - Romantic style - melody has long phrases, melody very important. Harmonic shifts chromatically or to unrelated keys. Accent of dissonance. Homophonic texture (melody in foreground). Epic or small pieces, character pieces typical. Piano development influenced music greatly, many piano pieces written at this time. Romantic style (from ‘About Music’) - expansive singing melodies; wide ranging melodies, varied with

chromatic inflections; rhythmic diversity and elasticity; tempo rubato; increasing chromaticism; expanded concepts of tonality; homophony, turning to increased polyphony in later years of era; genres included symphonic poems, art songs, solo piano works; expansion of forms and interest in continuous as well as miniature programmatic forms; mainly secular works for paying audiences (not sacred for church); wide ranging dynamics for expressive purposes; new instruments; increased virtuosity with more direction from composers in scores; expression concerned with individual emotion, mood, atmosphere; interest in the bizarre and macabre.!