



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource

Emily Barr Presents:

“Crested Ibis” from *Children of Light* by Karen Tanaka

Preparation and Presentation

Context: pieces that are helpful to have experienced or played before approaching this one

- Friedrich Burgmüller: *Sincerity*, Op. 100, No. 1
- Enrique Granados: “Epilogue” from *Escenas Románticas*
- Karen Tanaka: *Lavender Field*
- Fryderyk Chopin: Prelude in B Minor, Op. 28, No. 6

Get Ready: creative activities to explore before the first encounter with the score, to prepare a student for deeper engagement and more immediate success

- Read about the inspiration behind “Children of Light” in Tanaka’s preface to the collection.
- Discover the story of the crested ibis and how they are returning from near extinction through faithful conservation efforts.
- Listen to a performance of this piece. How does the music depict the grace and elegance of this bird?

Initial Focus: features to pay attention to first; priority steps in reading and absorbing the music

- Identify the RH accompaniment pattern. Which chord member is played at the highest and lowest points of the pattern?
- Locate and mark the meter changes. How does this help you determine the piece’s form?
- Where is the climax of the piece? How can you tell?
- Follow the left hand line with your eyes. Point out each time the left hand changes clefs. Mark as needed.
- Tap the rhythm of both hands in mm. 1-4. Then, finger through the notes in rhythm on the fallboard. Be sure to internalize how it feels to play twos against threes.

Coordination Essentials: physical skills and drills for common technical challenges in the piece

- Gentle counterclockwise rotation of the RH wrist to ensure looseness and flexibility throughout: “Up and over, down and around.”
- Large rolled chords in LH spanning 10ths, 11ths, and a 13th require careful planning in regards to timing, pedaling, and voicing.

- Choreography is essential when the hands share notes in the same register. The RH should begin the piece at a lower position near the edge of the keys, while the LH begins at a higher position in the middle of the keys.

Expressivity: ideas to connect with the expressive and musical nature of the piece

- Create a story to portray this piece. Set the scene: a crested ibis glides gracefully over hills and valleys while the sun illuminates the pink edges on its wings. Then, a surprising harmony takes place. How does the story continue?
- Sing along with the LH melody as you play. Observe how your voice naturally shapes each line. Where did you enjoy taking a little time?
- Add breath marks to the score to enhance the "singing" effect of the left hand.
- Experiment with harmonic shaping in mm. 19-23. How can the rolled chords build intensity in these measures?

Look Forward: approaches to set up for success with refinements that will need attention a few weeks down the road

- Ensure the melody is learned and played with finger legato first before adding pedal. Rolled chords may be temporarily omitted to ensure a smooth, continuous sound.
- Practice voicing to the tops of the rolled chords in the left hand, lightly playing the lower notes and reserving more weight for the thumb to play. Because the top note of each rolled chord is part of the melody, it is important to adjust the balance between the individual notes of the chords.