



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource

Ricardo Pozenatto presents: Valsinha (Little Waltz) by Francisco Mignone

Preparation and Presentation

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

- Ferdinand Beyer: Elementary Method for the Piano, Op. 101, No. 10
- William Gillock: Little Flower Girl from Paris
- Dmitri Kabalevsky: Waltz, Op. 39, No. 13
- Italo Taranta: A Starry Night
- Pyotr Tchaikovsky: The Sick Doll, Op. 39, No. 7

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

- The teacher plays the piece for the student and the student guesses the time signature. Ask: what dances are in 3/4 time signature? Further discuss dances (e.g., minuet, waltz) and highlight the dance-like feeling of a strong-weak-weak meter.
- The teacher plays the piece for the student while the student conducts. The student's conduct should reflect the playing expressiveness of the teacher (e.g., emphasizing dynamics, phrasing, and perhaps even small *ritardando* at end of phrases).
- The student plays the E minor arpeggio, 2 octaves, one hand at a time and hands together.
- The student taps diverse rhythms (e.g., dotted quarter note followed by the eighth-note; eighth-notes) with the RH while tapping a steady beat with the LH.
- The student plays a pentascale demonstrating a *legato* articulation with the RH while playing *staccato*/non-*legato* triads with the LH.

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

- Divide the piece into 3 sections where each section is 16-measures long. Discuss the different characteristics of each section, by asking, for example, "Did you notice how the final section is faster than the previous ones?"
- Most phrases are 4-measures long; therefore, the climaxes of the phrases will most likely occur in the third measure of the phrase. Play the RH alone looking for such shaping.
- Analyze the harmonic content of the piece. Play the LH by itself and discuss how the applied dominant chords will inform the interpretation of the phrases, especially m. 33 onwards.

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

- Balance between hands is essential in this piece. The student should already feel somewhat comfortable playing a RH cantabile line over a softer LH accompaniment.
- Listen to the two parts played by the LH starting in measure 33. Start by playing the dotted half-notes with the LH and the quarter notes with the RH looking for the different articulation and good balance between parts. Transfer that while playing both parts with the LH only.
- Approach playing the LH accompaniment by using a flexible wrist, moving it from close to the keys during beats two and three, upwards. This will facilitate a non-legato articulation, which is needed for the accompaniment of this piece.

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

- Although short, this piece is filled with character and expressivity. Students should keep in mind how each section develops the character further. Creating a storyline for the piece could support the student's connection with the music.
- The student creates words to sing the melodic line, keeping in mind the four-measures phrase structure. For example, the words "The sweet memories I have" fits the first phrase. By singing and then singing while playing, the student will have a better understanding of the shaping of the phrases and will more meaningfully connect with the music.
- Consider the applied dominants in the final section of the piece. Further, analyze the harmonic content and discuss how it will inform the musical interpretation of the piece.

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

- From the early stages of practice, students need a light touch for the accompaniment part. Encourage them to be aware of the weight difference between their arms while practicing each part— accompaniment and melody—of the piece.
- Although not *staccato*, encourage students to play the LH quietly and shortly from the beginning. That will facilitate the coordination of articulation between hands. As the student is accustomed to the light touch, encourage them to play the accompaniment not as short, developing a non-*legato* articulation instead.
- From measure 33 onwards, play the RH melody along with the LH dotted half-notes only. Listen to the long LH notes while shaping the phrases. Later, quietly add the LH quarter notes on beats 2 and 3. This will train the student's ears to listen for the different layers of the music texture.