



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource

John Price presents:

“Morning Prayer” from *Album for the Young* Op. 39, No. 1 by Pyotr Tchaikovsky

Preparation and Presentation

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

- Cornelius Gurlitt: “Morning Song” Op. 140 No. 2
- Robert Schumann: “Soldier's March” Op. 68 No. 2
- Ludwig van Beethoven: Ecossaise in G Major, WoO 23

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

- Demonstrate the SATB voicing and have the student play a four note chord with proper balance, first from the bottom up and then simultaneously.
- Have the student improvise short melodic phrases in 5-finger patterns or scales with the goal of creating a climactic high point and resolution in each.
- Practice long *decrescendos* and *crescendos* on repetition of a single note.
- Read the melody and bass parts of simple four-part examples.

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

- Practice hands separate in the beginning with careful attention to fingering.
- Put hands together slowly, paying attention to each chordal shape.
- Analyze the chords if the student knows enough music theory.

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

- Practice playing two note clusters with more weight on the upper voice.
- Play one bass note with finger 5 in repeated eights while the other fingers play a legato line in quarters.
- Practice two-note chords broken to focus on the voicing. Then gradually bring the two notes closer together in timing until they are simultaneous.

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

- Have the student identify significant points of harmonic tension while the teacher plays.
- Discuss the peaceful character of the work and how it relates to the title (e.g. morning time along with solitary activity of prayer or meditation).
- Ask the student to sing the melody line and then try to reproduce the phrase shape and rubato on the keyboard.
- Identify and mark the climactic point of each phrase.

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

- Clearly number the sections, based on phrase structure, for the student to focus on individually.
- Identify difficult sections for special focus both in the lesson and at home.
- Create tailored finger independence exercises to help the student achieve different dynamic levels and articulations in a single hand.