



# 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**

## Process and Practice

**Fully present:** tips for maintaining focus and engagement over time

- Have your student listen to recordings of great pianists playing the work.
- Compare to other pieces in the set (e.g. “In Church”) or works by other composers.

**Break it up:** useful practice segments; how to connect them and plug them back into the whole

- Practice only the melody line of each phrase while shaping it precisely like their ideal sound model.
- Play only melody and bass parts (preferably from memory), paying attention to proper balance and shaping.
- Overlap phrases or sub-phrases so one section ends with the first note of the next section. This makes it easier when stringing sections together.

**Layers and outlines:** tips for focusing on how the parts makeup the whole

- The phrase structure of the work as a whole should be understood from memory and notated in the score. Practice sections are also derived from this structure.
- Locate the furthest harmonic point from the tonic key in this work and note where the home key returns.

**Achieving flow:** ideas for finding and maintaining tempo, managing modifications artistically

- Imagine the opening tempo before beginning and breathe in tempo prior to the first note.
- Visualize horizontal movement or "propulsion" between static chords.

**Make it mine:** tips for developing and refining a personal, internal sense of the piece

- Have the student listen to and identify favorite recordings of the piece.
- Ask your student to create their own narrative associated with the music to help them connect more personally with the work.

**Deep knowing:** tips for securing memory

- Understand and memorize the harmonic structure of the piece including cadences, pedal points etc.
- Practice playing hands alone, especially left hand alone, from memory.
- Be able to start at each section identified for practice.

- Your student should have as many additional memory sources as possible besides just tactile. These other types of memory include analytical, aural, and visual. Visual memory varies by student whether they find it easier to picture the score in their head or the keyboard itself. To be truly memorized, your student should be able to visualize a complete performance of their work away from the piano.

**Final stages:** tips for ensuring performance readiness, maintaining freshness and spontaneity, and reinforcing an expressive personal connection

- Practice performing the piece for family and friends.
- Record your student on video and play it back. What changes would they make?
- Have your student compare their video recording to professional recordings. What is different or the same?