



# Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource

## Megan Rich Blood presents: Invention No. 2 in C Minor by J.S. Bach

### Process and Practice

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

- Map out memory spots that students can use to secure memory and use for concentration in performance.
- Build inner dialogue into the piece so that musical goals are present in every phrase.

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

- Play individual presentations of the theme hands separately. Make sure they are treated similarly in each hand.
- Find places where one idea begins before another idea ends, such as m. 3. Which voice is the soloist? Does the “background” voice still have shape?

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

- Think of this as a duet where both parts are important, but the players take turns being the leader.
- Analyze the key areas and use this to inform dynamics and touch. For example, when the theme occurs in a new key, it might be played with a different touch. When the theme returns to its original key in the final measures, it should be played with a full, forte sound and a slight *ritardando* to indicate finality.

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

- Listen to other works by Bach and find some ideas about *tempo*. Find a speed at which the ornaments do not detract from the flow and discuss dance tempos when appropriate.
- Modify the ornaments so that they can be played comfortably without dragging. If a trill is too much, play a mordent.

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

- Choose two instruments or voices to imitate, especially ones the student has some experience with. If they are in choir, choose two voice types. If they enjoy listening to orchestral music, choose two string instruments. This will help them to hear the two solo parts and interpret them in their own way.
- Discuss different ways to play the theme and countertheme. Should they both be completely legato? Should lifts occur between large leaps? This may change depending on which instruments the student is imitating.

**Deep knowing:** tips for securing memory

- Make a separate physical copy and highlight the themes, counterthemes, and cadences.
- Be able to play each element out of the context of the rest of the piece.

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

- Mentally refresh your memory map often, paying particular attention to themes, counterthemes, and cadences.
- Listen to other inventions and absorb the style.
- Record yourself often and evaluate steadiness, finger legato, and clarity of themes.