



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource

Jessie Welsh presents:

“Introduction” from *Valses Poéticas* by Enrique Granados

Process and Practice

Fully present: tips for maintaining focus and engagement over time

- Find hidden lines and melodies that complement the primary melodic line.
- “Opposites” practice: rehearse with opposite articulations, mood, dynamics, etc.
- Take time before beginning a performance to visualize the sound, character, tempo, and overall success of the performance.
- What is it that first drew you to this work? How can you capture the magic of that first exposure to the work?
- Engage in mindfulness practice during performance, always returning to the present moment and the sound.

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

- Practice the “etudes” separately (noted in the Presentation and Preparation list), then put them back into context by adding the transitional measures.
- Identify sections and/or chunks by “stars” and gradually increase the number of stars “performed” in a practice segment.
- Find similar passages and practice them with varying dynamic levels throughout the piece; then put them back into context of the phrase.

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

- Find all “turn around” or transitional moments in the piece. Where are these the same and/or different in repeated sections?
- Practice bass and melody alone.
- Practice voicing for a singing top right-hand line.

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

- Conducting bars: count the length of phrases by the number of bars and work to feel each of these segments as a whole.
- “Over the bar line” practice to feel the connection to the next element and to feel the pulse always moving forward.
- Small sections faster than performance speed, always feeling the coordination of the hands and “dance” of the movement patterns

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

- Focus on character and notice any subtle moments in the piece where the character changes. Exaggerate these shifts, however slight.
- Identify places in the music where it might be appropriate to change the color. Consider “instrumentation” and how this might inspire a specific tone/touch/sound.
- Record your own performances and self-assess; compare and contrast with favorite recordings.

Deep knowing: tips for securing memory

- Eyes closed practice, especially for big jumps.
- Feel the coordination of the body, stemming from a supported and energetic seating posture. Notice the movement of the body on the sitz bones and the “recentering” required, especially on the passages in a very high register.
- Sing the bass line while playing the melody and vice versa.
- Practice half tempo with exaggerated motions and all details in place.

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

- Double-note practice: play every note twice in a row under tempo.
- Three speeds practice: half tempo, slightly under tempo, and faster than performance tempo.
- Practice opening and beginning only, in tempo with exaggerated character.
- Perform daily and self-assess.