



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource

Christina Lai presents:

“Aubade” from *Scènes enfantines*, Op. 92 by Mélanie Bonis

Process and Practice

Fully present: tips for maintaining focus and engagement over time

- Focus on the sound coming from the instrument, not the physical movements of the hands.
- Audiate the vocal lines.
- Imagine sending the sounds to your audience.
- Follow a story or a plot that you've set for the piece.

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

- Look at the textual clues to help determine the characteristics of the different sections.
- Practice sections that are similar, determine how they are different from each other, and capture these differences in your sound.
- Practice transitions between sections and then play the larger sections in succession with the transition.

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

- Different parts of the piece act as different parts of the story; identify them!
- The introduction leads to a conversation between two lovers with some interruptions of nature and birds; match the narrative to the sound.
- Think about how the return to the main conversation is different from the opening conversation.
- Identify the climactic moment of the piece and plan its transition back to the main theme.

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

- Think about the tempo as you would sing it.
- Choose a tempo that feels like a comfortable dance lilt.
- Conduct the lilting pulse.
- Physically dance and sing the melody.

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

- Sing the parts in your own way, and don't just copy recordings.
- Imagine your own story based on the character and sounds.
- Listen to recordings of Bonis's other pieces.

- Try different interpretations until you find one that feels the most genuine.

Deep knowing: tips for securing memory

- Play the piece mentally, away from the instrument.
- Sing the solfege or letter names of the melody.
- Find starting spots—start from the beginning and stop at random places, roughly every two measures; put your hands in your lap, then find the next starting spot before continuing.

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

- Perform in front of different audiences, especially those that make you nervous!
- When performing, focus on riding the waves of the sound and story, instead of on the small details you practiced.
- Think about a personal relationship you might have or a wonderful moment in your life before you perform.