



# Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource

## Angela Miller-Niles presents: Aubade, op. 126, no. 2 by Cécile Chaminade

### Preparation and Presentation

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

- Pieces with clear distinction between melody and accompaniment, like Robert Schumann's Melody, op. 68, no. 1.
- Pieces with multiple voices in one hand, like Pyotr Tchaikovsky's Op. 39 Nos. 1 or 16 or Cornelius Gurlitt's Op. 140, Nos. 5 or 11.

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

- Start with the composer so students have an idea of the historical setting of their piece. Cécile Chaminade was a French female composer who lived 1857-1944 and enjoyed huge success during her lifetime. Her works are tuneful, accessible and fun to play. Have students do some research on her to find out about her personal life and what things were like when she lived.
- An *aubade* is a morning love song, and can have a variety of subtexts. It can mean something sung to a loved one when leaving for the day or simply a greeting of the dawn. Students should remember that it is a type of song, as that will remind them to have a singing tone in the melody throughout.
- Translate any markings, as Chaminade sometimes gives longer instructions in French. Students should know the translations of all markings before they get started. In *Aubade*, point out that the markings tell us to emphasize the 'song' and that the melody should be clearly projected.

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

- The LH plays the melody in the A section, which may be new to some students. Have them play LH alone, trying to phrase the melody. It might be helpful to have the RH play the melody so they can hear how they want it to sound and then transfer that to the LH.
- There are no fingerings in most versions of the score. Depending on the student, you may need to work through fingering together or write it in advance before giving the score to the student.

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

- In the B section, the RH has two voices with different functions. The melody is in the top voice, and the bottom voice is part of the chordal accompaniment with the LH. Start by

playing just the soprano melody. Then, try all the accompanying voices with LH and the bottom of the RH. Finally, add all voices together and make sure the melody is singing out.

- M29 is a tricky moment to isolate for both voicing and physically jumping. Play just the LH melody, then add the RH harmony notes, and finally add the low E in the LH to put it all together. Practicing the LH alone to focus on the jump can also be helpful.

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

- It's essential to bring out the melody wherever it happens to be in the piece. Phrasing expressively is also important to show that this is a type of song.
- The B section is marked *dolce*. Discuss with the student what that means in terms of sound and brainstorm ways to bring out that character.

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

- Chaminade gives very specific dynamics, often separate ones for each hand. Make sure students are really playing what's written.
- There are specific pedal markings in the score that are sometimes different than students might usually do. For example, some are held for two measures to sustain harmonies. Check that students are paying attention to their pedaling and doing what's marked. Depending on the instrument, some markings may have to be adjusted.
- Point out the different articulation markings throughout the piece. There are *tenuto* markings, accents and many slurs. Consider showing the student to use a more sustained, legato touch for the chords with *tenuto* markings.