



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource

Shelby Nord presents:

“To the Garden” from *Pour les enfants* by Tansman

Preparation and Presentation

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

- J.C. Bach: Agitato, T. 349/1
- Diabelli: Waltz, Op. 125, No. 7
- R. Schumann: “Soldier’s March,” Op. 68, No. 2
- W.A. Mozart: Menuetto in C Major
- Telfer: The Silent Moon

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

- Student and teacher improvise melodies using patterns in A harmonic minor and 3/4 time.
- Student improvises a melody beginning on the upbeat while the teacher provides harmonic support on the downbeats.
- Student plays an open fifth or simple chord progression using the accompaniment rhythm.
- Student improvises a simple melody and accompaniment using the rhythms from the piece.
- Teacher performs the piece and asks the student to listen for rhythmic and melodic patterns (without looking at the score).

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

- Listen to the first phrase, then tap the rhythm hands together.
- Observe that the melodic notes begin on an upbeat and move to the downbeat of each measure.
- Observe that the bass notes move lower by the interval of a second in each measure of the first two phrases.
- Identify the differences between the accompaniment in measures 1-4 and measures 5-8.
- Identify the melodic sequences in measures 9-16.

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

- Tap the rhythm hands together and/or hands separately.
- Sing the melody while tapping or stomping the accompaniment rhythm.
- Play the accompaniment while singing the melody.

- Play the melody while tapping the accompaniment rhythm.
- Drill the rhythm difference in measures 1-4 and measures 9-12.

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

- Find places where the piece moves to major, and play those sections with a brighter tone quality.
- Dynamically shape each phrase.
- Explore additional pedaling, such as harmonic overlapping pedal or only on the accompaniment notes.
- Ask the student to describe how the piece makes them feel and how they would convey that character or emotion.
- Discuss potential reasons the composer labeled this piece “To the Garden.” What kind of garden? What kind of people are in this garden? What is the weather like in the garden?

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

- Play with a full, warm tone but with a gentle touch.
- Practice tapering the ends of phrases dynamically and breathing before beginning the next phrase. (These can be practiced simply by singing the melody.)
- Gradually pace the *ritardando* and *rallentando* for optimal effectiveness and character portrayal.
- Listen carefully to the added pedal to avoid blurriness.
- Listen carefully for balance between hands.