



# Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource

**Shelby Nord presents:**

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

## Process and Practice

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

- Explore playing the melody with different rhythms.
- Change the accompaniment pattern (blocked instead of broken, using various rhythms, etc.).
- Play the minor parts in the parallel major key to engage the ear in a new way.
- Play the piece as a duet: the student plays one hand and the teacher plays the other, then they switch.
- Improvise a new melody over the accompaniment.

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

- Begin on the upbeat of measure 3 and play to the end of the phrase. Next, begin on the upbeat of measure 2 and play to the end of the phrase. Finally, start at the beginning and play to the end of the phrase. (This can help students feel the forward motion to the downbeats and toward the end of the phrase.)
- Practice phrases 1 and 2 for side-by-side comparison.
- In the middle section (ms. 9-16), play in two-measure groups, followed by four-measure groups, and then finally the complete section.
- Practice phrase 1 and a similar phrase (e.g., ms. 17-20) side-by-side for comparison.
- Practice the shorter practices (ms. 9-10 and ms. 11-12) separately from the longer slurred phrases.

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

- Define the organization of the piece with section labels.
- Describe how the composer helps the performer arrive back at the mood of the first part after the climax in measure 16.
- Observe the intervallic organization of the sequences in measures 9-17.
- Discover where there are three voices instead of just two.

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

- Set a moderate tempo that is appropriate for the mood.
- Imagine someone singing the melody with a forward flow and yet still having time to breathe between phrases.
- Imagine that the “accompanist” patiently waits for the “singer” before responding.

- Feel a forward pull (like a magnet) to the climax (ms. 16) when beginning the phrase that starts in measure 13.
- Feel that the *ritardando* in the last two measures is primarily guided by the rhythm of the accompaniment while still listening for clear balance between voices.

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

- Discuss the particular moods and emotions throughout the piece.
- Discuss the student's favorite sections of the piece and explore what makes those sections special.
- Explore how the student can express the character of the piece in a personal way, perhaps through the use of a different artistic medium (i.e., painting, drawing, dancing, writing poetry, or creating lyrics).
- Ask the student for what particular occasion this piece should be performed and why: describe the location, scenery, weather, people, etc.
- Draw small icons (e.g., sun, rain, rose) to help identify particular feelings at different parts of the piece.

**Deep knowing:** tips for securing memory

- Audiate each phrase of the piece for comparison and memory.
- Draw a diagram of the piece.
- Sing the melody on solfege.
- Analyze the key areas and chord progressions of each sequence and phrase.
- Play hands separately memorized.

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

- Record a performance of the piece each day leading up to the recital.
- Play the piece at different tempi to help solidify the most comfortable tempo.
- Play the piece to a metronome to check the pacing of the *ritardando* and *rallentando*.
- Exaggerate the dynamics, then refine them.
- Play with eyes closed to engage kinesthetic and auditory memory.
- Play with different articulations (e.g., staccato instead of legato).
- Play without pedal to listen for clarity.