



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource

Almond Ponge presents:

Über Stock und Stein, Op. 17, No. 5 by Max Reger

Preparation and Presentation

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

- “Staccato Strut” by Dennis Alexander
- Polka, Op. 280, No. 2 by Johann Hummel
- Trumpet Piece in C Major by Henry Purcell

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

- Improvise and/or compose a piece in 6/8 time
- Engage in rhythmic and melodic playbacks using motivic elements from the piece
- Use previous repertoire to demonstrate staccato touch and contrast that to legato playing

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

- Discover the main melodic line and find where it moves between hands
- Identify the range of dynamic markings and pay close attention to sudden dynamic changes
- Tap the rhythm on the keyboard cover to feel rhythmic groupings and a staccato touch
- Isolate challenging fingerings in measures 13-15, 41-43 (left hand), and 28-32 (right hand)

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

- Do finger warm-ups similar to the pattern in measure 4 for both hands, with the left hand playing legato and the right hand playing staccato
- Alternate legato and staccato playing in scale practice, focusing on maintaining gesture in both articulations
- Note measures with non-staccato articulation
- Practice two-note slurs with an up/down gesture

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

- Explore the idea of a *crescendo* from *forte* to *fortissimo* in measures 22-24, while maintaining a warm sound
- Explore the connection between staccato playing and the character of the piece
- Discuss the title and find elements of the music that support your narrative

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

- Be aware of tenuto and slurred notes in the left hand (e.g., measures 4, 8, 12, 16, and 25)
- Make sure that one hand does not anticipate the downbeat when pickups are notated
- Pace *crescendos* and *diminuendos*, as well as the *ritardando* in measure 36
- Group gestures in the left hand, always leading to the next beat (e.g., measure 8)