



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

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Lark Powers presents: Sonata in A Major by Marianna Martines

Preparation and Presentation

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

- Early Haydn Sonatas (he called them “Partitas” or “Divertimenti”), such as Partita in G Major, Hob. XVI:6 or Divertimento in E Major, Hob. XVI:13
- One of the many C.P.E. Bach Sonatas, such as one from the collections of Wüttemberg or Prussian Sonatas

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

- Consider the historical context, specifically in relation to the instruments during Martines’s compositional output
- Listen to this sonata on different instruments (e.g., modern piano, forte piano, and harpsichord), analyzing what sounds similar and what comes across differently
- Reflect on performances on different instruments, considering the following:
 - How does the choice of performance instrument affect mood, tempo, texture, projection of melody, realization of ornaments, etc.?
 - While the title page indicates Martines composed this specifically for forte piano, what elements of the composition also lend themselves to the harpsichord or the modern piano?
- Instead of attempting to “copy” performances on historical instruments, consider the strengths of the modern piano and how to bring out the necessary clarity, delicacy, different textures, and varied colors
- Listen to recordings and conduct the score
- Focus specifically on how the ornamentation groupings fit into the pulse
- Establish descriptive words and build images that fit the mood of each movement.
- Imagine being a film director and utilizing this music for a scene; what is going on in this scene? Who is present? What is the time of day, or what is the weather like?
- Examine portraits of Marianna Martines to better understand the time period in which she lived
- Write in phrasing and shaping, notating climactic notes of each phrase; use colored pencils to notate this
- Explore and discuss *Empfindsamer stile* and its characteristics; how does this work embody that style? (e.g., “sigh” (*appoggiatura*) motives)

- Learn about historical minuet dances by watching video recordings and trying out dance steps

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

- Focus first on the rhythm, always keeping a steady pulse throughout the initial learning process—even at a slow tempo
- First feel subdivisions of the beat, then move to bigger beats
- Keep dotted figures crisp and precise, subdividing sixteenth notes as necessary
- Explore the harmonic skeleton of the music by blocking the harmonies to feel harmonic growth, tension, and release of each phrase (leave rhythm out of this step)
- Practice first without ornaments to solidify the rhythm and understand the underlying structure of the melodic line, always listening for a singing melody
- Sing along while playing, in order to improve phrasing/shaping and audiate the melody
- Based on the harmonic inflection, melodic shape, and texture, begin to infer dynamics
- Determine the form of each movement, analyzing the score and writing in sections, key areas, and themes

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

- Voice the melody over the accompaniment the following ways:
 - Ghosting” the left hand
 - Blocking the harmony at a soft dynamic
 - Playing the accompaniment staccato and the melody in a strong, *cantabile* manner
- Extract ornaments from the score, write them out on staff paper, and create “etude” exercises for students
- Experiment with different gestures for different ornaments:
 - It is helpful to play shorter ornaments (like mordents) from the air with a loose wrist and dropping motion (e.g., measure 17-18)
 - You may try backward add-a-note practice from the end for longer trills, always leading the gesture to the downbeat
- Count aloud while playing, with an awareness of the meter and any metric emphases
- Count the hyper meter aloud, allowing the voice to demonstrate the shaping of each phrase
- Listen for a *cantabile* sound and careful legato; maintain this sound when adding ornaments back in
- Listen for clarity of passagework; change rhythms for increasing evenness and control

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

- Explore different “versions” of the piece on the repeats (specifically with dynamics and ornaments)
- Locate the loudest and softest moments of the piece, then incorporate the full dynamic range throughout and label these in the score (always keeping the appropriate character in mind)
- Explore textural changes in the piece, considering how these changes vary the character
- Consider pedaling judiciously, experimenting with various depths of pedaling

- Feel the final movement (a minuet) in one pulse per bar to best match the character and lightness of the word

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

- Continue to keep the large pulse and rhythmic patterns clear
- Continue counting the hypermeter to build a sense of forward motion (without rushing)
- Refine phrases, always leading to a specific “destination,” and taper endings elegantly
- Record students and listen back for voicing and textural control
- Finalize the dynamic scheme, including changes on the repeats