



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource

Christie Sowby presents: Echo Dream by Emma Lou Diemer

Process and Practice

Fully present: tips for maintaining focus and engagement over time

- Discuss the following prompts:
 - Can you tell when you lose your focus during a performance?
 - How can you most beautifully connect each four-note slur?
 - How can you make the musical line even longer?
 - How much freedom can you maintain in your shoulders (or neck, back, wrists, palms, elbows, knees, jaw, etc.) while performing?
 - How can this be easier?
 - How steady can your tempo be?
 - How connected can your notes be?
 - Find more questions at classicalguitarshed.com/questions/
- Record the student and watch/listen back together with the score
- Have the student teach the teacher how to play the piece, as if the teacher was a beginner (describe the shape/feel of the keys, fingering, gestures, physical movements, etc.)

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

- Play each measure as a blocked chord with the given fingering and the pedal dampened
- Decode the form of the piece (AABBC)
- Focus on the following components in each 4-measure section: fingering, expression, rhythm, notes (count the rhythm aloud while playing)

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

- Have the student mark the form in the piece as they listen to a performance
- Decode the harmonic progression of each 4-measure phrase (and know the order)

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

- Practice finding metronome marking 53 per quarter note based off of looking at a clock and going slightly slower (1 second = 60 bpm on the metronome)
- Mentally subdivide eighth notes throughout the piece
- Listen for dynamic levels, depending on the resonance of the piano and the room
- Tell the “story” of the piece harmonically

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

- Explore counting aloud in eighths, quarters, half notes, and then 1, 2, 3, and 4 measures at a time
- Alternate between feeling micro and macro beats
- Have the student create a story that goes with the piece
- Apply concepts of different instrumentation to the piece
- Have the student think of the composer's perspective and bring out all elements of the score

Deep knowing: tips for securing memory

- Start on any 4-measure section at random
- Play with eyes closed
- Play hands alone or hands together when called out by the teacher without disrupting the pulse
- Analyze the chords of the piece aloud while playing in time
- Write out the analysis of the piece and create a visual "map"

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

- Perform the piece ten times for others before performing in a recital
- Consider the following questions:
 - Do you hear every single note?
 - How can you practice this passage differently to gain a new perspective?
 - How can you demonstrate the rhythm so that it speaks to the emotional substance of this piece?
 - How do things in the natural world move?
 - Find more questions at classicalguitarshed.com/questions/
- Perform the music without disclosing the title; have the audience guess the title/character
- Perform the piece three different ways, exploring different dynamics, rubato, underlying pulse, etc.