



# Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource

**Kate Acone presents:**

## ***The Easy Winners* by Scott Joplin**

### **Process and Practice**

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

- Choose a shape for your *crescendos* and *diminuendos*. Experiment with inverting these and seeing what it does to the phrase.
- Consider how you use articulation to mark phrases or syncopation.

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

- Pick a definite mood for each large section. Once you have the sound you want in an individual section, see how quickly and dramatically you can shift from one to the next.
- Try playing mm. 1-4 and mm. 53-56 back to back: how do they compare?

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

- The LH frequently plays just a stride bass, so its chromatic sections are particularly striking. Can you phrase this too?
- Pace your *crescendos* to the top of the melodic line, and make sure you can still hear the melody even as you get softer towards the bottom.

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

- Practice with the LH driving the beat. Lean on the bass notes to hear a steady groove.
- Suggestion: slow down when the LH has stepwise motion to show off those leading tones.
- Each section ends with a cadence – how can you mark these cadences with time without making each the same?

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

- Experiment with different types of touch – which parts would benefit from a more percussive touch and which parts would sound better lyrical?
- Experiment with different levels of balance – when do you want the LH to be more present, and where should it take a backseat?

**Deep knowing:** tips for securing memory

- Practice the similar themes back to back to ensure you can remember how they change.
- Practice leaving out your RH for a measure and bringing it back in to see if your LH can keep up while you audiate the melody.

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

- Practice performing at slightly different tempos: what characteristics of the piece come out with each choice?
- See if you can sing the melody line the whole time while you play.