



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A *Piano Magazine* subscriber-exclusive digital resource

Sara Ernst presents:

***Aus dem Norden*, op. 130, no. 21 by Cornelius Gurlitt**

Process and Practice

Fully Present: tips for maintaining focus and engagement over time

- Consider phrase shape and contrast in a predominantly forte context; formal analysis can help in decision making as four-measure phrases conclude with half cadences (to the dominant) and full cadences.
- Unexpected harmonic twists in the B section are captivating; note the modal shifts in mm. 12-13, 15- 16.

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

- Phrase by phrase practice, alternating slow practice for precision with performance-tempo practice for shaping.
- Short segments (half-measure, full-measure) with careful listening and slow practice to secure the alignment of the dotted figure and steady eighths, and optimal balance of melody and accompaniment.

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

- The bass line—the bottom note of each LH chord—can be given subtle emphasis to enrich the texture.
- Practicing the bass line against the melody results in a clear duet between melody and bass.

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

- Conduct two pulses per bar while singing the melody (or while someone else performs the melody; use this activity to find the surprising rhythmic syncopations (mm. 11-12) and metric accents (m. 67).
- Try a variety of tempi, especially those outside the *allegretto* marking, from the slow and mournful to the fast and dancing; the ideal pulse will be between these two extremes.
- Repeat this exercise at three tempi within an *allegretto* range to find an ideal *allegretto* flow.

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

- The reprise of the A section (mm. 17-24) must be shaped differently; discuss the instability of the B section and how it transforms the mood of the second A section.

Deep knowing: tips for securing memory

- After each four measure phrase, stop, remove the hands from the keyboard, and then resume the next phrase; the result is a series of firm memory landmarks.

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

- Conduct or play along with the student, having them experience a variety of ways to push and pull the pulse, shape phrases, and pace cadences, thus providing several convincing ways to interpret the music.