



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Clavier Companion subscriber-exclusive digital resource

Kristina Henckel presents:

Minuet No. 1 from *Six Minuets for Piano* by Maria Szymanowska

Preparation and Presentation

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

- J.S. Bach: Short Prelude in C Major, BWV 939
- M. Clementi: Sonatina in C Major, Op. 36, No. 3
- C. Czerny: *The School of Velocity*, Op. 299, No. 3 and 4
- F. Schubert: Landler in A Minor, Op. Posth., D 366, No. 5
- F. Schubert: German Dance in A-flat Major, D. 783, No. 15

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

- Introduce the composer's biography
- Demonstrate the piece by playing
- Discuss the character of the piece
 - Minuet and Trio: dances
 - Compare with the stately baroque style of the minuet and light classical style of minuets and trios
 - Bring attention to the melodic contour and musical gestures in the score and compare with dance movements
- Consider the *Pas de deux* – dance duet
 - Have the student identify possibilities of the two dancing characters and their body movements according to the music

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

- Note the repeated sections in the Minuet and Trio
- Identify common and repeated patterns in each subsection – a – b – c – d
 - Chords – broken or arpeggios
 - Scales – full or partial
- Establish harmonic premise of each dance

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

- Developing a singing tone quality in a moving melodic line
 - Establish connection of the finger with the bottom of the key
 - Silent practice for slow key descent

- Finger pedaling
- Proper hand form for 2 and 3-note slurs
- Embellishments – inverted turns
 - Starting on the lower note indicated – starting on the upper note optional
 - With arm/finger release of the preceding long note
 - With elbow swing in a direction of the ornament
 - Practicing various groupings of the turn with consistent fingering
- *Staccato*
 - Finger sweeps
 - 4-3-2-1
- Octave leaps

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

- Discuss the musical gestures according to the “story”
- The Minuet opening passage could be an entrance of a ballerina on stage
 - Shape *crescendos* and *diminuendos* to follow the rise and fall of the phrase
- The Minuet B section could be the entrance of the second dancer
 - Similar contour as the opening, but shorter and more direct
- Adjust dynamics to highlight the dialogue between the dancers
 - The LH is prominent in the first two measures, then the RH takes over
- Trio - Dancers join side by side (parallel motion) to rush (rapid *staccato*) and lift (octave leaps) repeatedly

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

- Timing and connecting individual sections
 - Clear and convincing timing of the anacrusis – especially tricky in the B section of the Trio
 - Smooth transitions between sections in each the Minuet and the Trio
 - Proper timing in the transition between the Minuet and Trio and the da capo Minuet (a repeat of the Minuet)
- Establishing clear articulation
 - Tricky measures – Minuet A section - m. 8
 - Trio – *staccato* not too light – marked *marcato*
 - All quarter notes in the LH of the Trio not too short