



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A *Piano Magazine* subscriber-exclusive digital resource

Ivan Hurd presents: Ivan Sings by Aram Katchaturian

Process and Practice

Fully Present: tips for maintaining focus and engagement over time

- Refine voicing of the LH accompaniment. Experiment with voicing the lower or upper note.
- Clearly define the phrase structure and develop a dynamic plan.

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

- Compare subtle changes in similar phrase endings such as m. 9 and m. 17. Play them back-to-back, experimenting with differences in timing and dynamics.
- Start the phrase at m. 2 and m. 18 comparing the differences in register, direction of melody, and LH intervals.
- Isolate mm. 23-24 to aim for clarity in the grace notes. Stop on the note directly following the grace note and then integrate it back into the long line.

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

- Reiterate the similarities of the chromatic LH accompaniment mm. 1-7 as thirds and mm. 18-23 as sixths, both of which use the same notes. Also identify how the linear chromaticism creates vertical harmonies with the RH melody.
- Practice the connection of phrase endings and beginnings such as m. 5-6, 9-10, 13-14, etc. This will help create a sense of continual flow so that the piece does not stagnate at the ends of phrases.
- Slowly practice mm. 18-25, stopping before each pedal change to listen for the mixture of sound for proper balance of texture as there are three voices in this section.

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

- Use a soft metronome to maintain a consistent tempo, and then count subdivided eighth notes on top of the metronome pulse. The verbal counting can speed up or slow down to help achieve smooth timing of rubato, while the metronome ensures that the rubato does not deviate too drastically from the overall tempo.
- Have the student conduct while the teacher plays to help gain a sense for the ebb and flow of the piece.
- Play the RH melody while lightly tapping half notes in the LH to feel the larger structure of the phrasing.

- Sing while playing to connect the natural rise and fall of our voice with the shaping of the melody and pacing of the phrasing.

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

- Ask the student to write lyrics to the melody and then sing those lyrics as they play.
- While the piece, overall, is melancholy, have the student use a variety of synonyms for character and mood. Write in adjectives in the score for each change in emotion.
- Perhaps have the student draw a picture and/or use a variety of colors to convey the feeling of the piece.
- Use additional dynamic markings and directional arrows to help make decisions of sound and timing more concrete.

Deep knowing: tips for securing memory

- Analyze all interval types and size between each melody note. Sing the interval names while playing.
- Analyze the chords and write those in the score. Also, sing the chord names while playing. For an additional challenge, do this from memory.
- Label sections of the piece by number, and then draw numbers out of a hat for randomized starting places.
- Make a copy of the score, cut up the measures, select a measure at random and be able to play from that spot to the end of the piece.
- Work from the end of the piece, playing the starting sections in reverse order.

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

- Ask the student to record the piece with a variety of intentions: for themselves, for a parent or friend, for their teacher, etc.
- Encourage the student to imagine playing the piece in a variety of contexts and spaces. Ask them questions about their audience, the size of the room, the stage, the lighting, the piano, etc. Create the most detailed mental image possible.
- Have the student play one hand from memory while you play the other.
- Have the student play the LH from memory and sing the entire RH melody as they play.
- Play only the beginning phrase on as many pianos as possible.