



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource

Lia Jensen-Abbott presents:

***Down a Southern Lane* by Florence Price**

Preparation and Presentation

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

- William Gillock: Deserted Plantation
- Aarm Khatchaturian: Ivan Sings
- Frédéric Chopin: Mazurka in G Minor, Op. 67, No. 2
- Frédéric Chopin: Waltz in A Minor, Op. Posth.
- Robert Schumann: Scenes from Childhood, Op. 15, Nos. 1, 2, and 3

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

- Look up pictures online of a southern lane and have the student write or draw pictures of their mental image after seeing pictures.
- Students should listen to ragtime genres to prepare for the B section, as well as hymn and spiritual genres for the A section.
- Have the students read and learn about Florence Price's life.

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

- Have the student discover the large section divisions of the piece (ABA Coda). Using the keys of E-flat major and C minor, work on constructing an expressive narrative for the piece.
- Once the large structural divisions are determined, help the student label every phrase in each section.
- The A section is difficult due to uneven phrase lengths. One possibility is a mm. 1-4, a1 mm. 5-12, b mm. 13-18, and a2 in mm. 19-26.
- The B section has four phrases: x mm. 27-30, x1 mm. 31-34, x2 mm. 35-38, and x3, mm. 39-47.
- The Coda has 2-3 phrases depending on the ending chosen.

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

- A section: practice one phrase at a time. Voicing of the opening chord/melody: E-flat in m. 1 which moves to a D b. 2 m. 2. Note that the high Bb is not the main melodic line.

- To practice voicing chords in the A section, first play the melodic pitch in the RH while the LH plays the other parts of the chord. Then, while singing the melody, play all notes in the RH chord with correct balance/voicing. See video for demonstration.
- B section: practice silently blocking the LH by itself.
- B section: practice RH inflection in mm. 27-28 and silently block RH mm. 29-30 for good finger preparation.

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

- All sections: syncopated pedaling practice. Students should say “up down” with each pedaling gesture, beginning with isolated measures and then moving to full phrases. At first, have the student coach the teacher.
- The B section can be first learned by tapping RH/LH in phrases on the keyboard cover and counting out loud. When playing, students should count or sing to help with tempo internalization.
- At mm. 35-40 of the B section, the LH pattern changes. Isolate the accompaniment between two hands (all phrases for B) to hear the secondary chromatic line.
- A section: have the student count/sing one phrase at a time in beat subdivisions to help create tempo security, even with the long note values in a *moderato* setting.

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

- As the student learns phrases fluently and accurately, continue to practice the B section phrases slowly for accurate shifting, counting, and finger preparation.
- In the A section, students can practice individual phrases HT in a faster tempo in order to hear the melodic lines and shape them more clearly. If that is not possible technically, have the student play only the melody in a quicker tempo to secure phrase shape decisions.
- In the B section, work on 1-2 beats at a time for tempo increases. For example: at m. 29, play beats 1-3 at the desired tempo and then stop. Once fluent, try m. 29, beat 3 to m. 30, beat 1 with a metronome at the desired tempo and then stop. Then play the entire measure stopping on m. 30, beat 1 up to tempo. Splice the entire phrase together in this manner up to tempo.