



# Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource

**Dr. Julie Knerr presents:**

**Spinning Song, op. 14, no. 4 by Albert Ellmenreich**

## Process and Practice

**Fully present, here and now:** tips for maintaining focus and engagement over time

- Focus on correct technique, articulation, and fingering from the start- the *first time*. Students tend to want to play fast too soon with this piece. Learning carefully and slowly will yield a more polished performance in the long run.

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

- Let the student “marinate” in one section for several weeks until s/he is confident at playing that one section. Then add another section. Assigning too much of a long piece at once can be overwhelming. For some students, learning this piece is akin to you learning a Chopin Sonata! It is not wise to bite off more sections than you can handle.

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

- To help the student keep in mind the scope of the piece, you may play sections antiphonally. For example, if the student only knows the A section, play through the entire piece with the student playing the A sections and you playing all the other sections. This will help the student keep the story and form of the piece in mind before having learned every section.

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

- Take charge of the tempo by demonstrating or playing along with the student at an intentionally slower tempo. Tell the student that once all the details of articulation and fingering are completely fluent and perfect, you will allow the student to play faster. It is a privilege to play fast!

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

- Use lyrics, funny stories, exaggeration of articulation and dynamics, or anything else you can think of to help the student connect with the piece and play the details correctly.
- Creating lyrics especially helps students in their understanding of the rhythmic inflection and energy.
- Teachers with imagination foster students with imagination.

**Deep knowing:** tips for securing memory

- For a real challenge, have the student count aloud while playing by memory!
- The student plays a section you call out in random order, “A Section. Coda. D Section...”

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

- The student plays at various tempos, both under tempo and slightly faster than usual.