



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource

Chris Madden presents: A Pleasant Morning by Jean Louis Strebogg

Process and Practice

Fully Present: tips for maintaining focus and engagement over time

- Always listen for well-paced crescendos. Try saving the majority of the crescendo for the final three notes of the scalar passage, at which point you might say, “and-then-to-therre” to reinforce the appropriate inflection.
- Be sure the “down-up” motion of your wrist matches the “more-less” sound you are trying to create on two-note slurs.

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

- Practice mm. 1-2 followed by 3-4. Which set of measures should be louder? Suggested answer: mm. 3-4 because the notes go higher.
- Play only the RH notes that fall on beats 1 and 3 in mm. 7-8. Suggested fingering for these RH notes is 3 – 3 – 3 – 2. Next, add the LH chords that support these notes, still only playing what falls on beats 1 and 3. Finally, play all notes.

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

- Notice the two-beat sequence in m. 7. Try using the same RH fingering for each chunk: 3 – 4 – 5 – 1.
- Play all three RH 2-note slurs in the A section. Then, decide which should be loudest, softest, and in the middle. This will create a clear dynamic shape for the whole section.

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

- To achieve a consistent opening tempo, sing the first two measures in your head before beginning. Instead of continuing to sing m. 3 in your head, begin the piece.
- A slight ritard in m. 16 might be appropriate. If you decide to include one, try subdividing sixteenth notes in your head around beat 3 or 4 in order to pace the ritard smoothly.

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

- Explore starting crescendos and decrescendos in slightly different places to create varied effects.
- Experiment with a slight ritard in m. 16 to make the A section’s return more effective.
- Explore varying dynamic plans for the coda (mm. 25-29). Should it drive all the way to the end, or does the sound relax on the repeated chords?

Deep knowing: tips for securing memory

- When memorizing, practice measures with similar patterns together. For example, mm. 1-4, mm. 9-10, and mm. 11-12.
- Remember that all scale passages follow the “standard” scale fingering. This will keep you oriented as you play.

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

- Practice starting from the beginning of each section (A, B, A, and coda).
- Record your performance and listen back to be sure your intentions come through clearly.