



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A *Piano Magazine* subscriber-exclusive digital resource

Danny Milan presents:

***Pièces minuscules pour les enfants, Op. 16* by Filip Lazăr**

Preparation and Presentation

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

- Béla Bartók, easier selections from *For Children* such as Nos. 2, 3, 6, and 10 from Book I, and Nos. 3, 7, 22, and 38 from Book II
- Dmitry Kabalevsky: “Clowns,” Op. 39, No. 20
- Octavio Pinto, “Prelude” from *Children’s Festival*
- J.S. Bach: the easier stand-alone works that introduce examples of simple, two-part counterpoint and imitation. Some examples include Polonaise in G Minor (Anh. 119), Minuet in A Minor (Anh. 120), Minuet in C Minor (Anh. 121), and March in G Major (Anh. 124).

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

- Create a robust imagery of Romanian culture by exploring photographs of Romanian landscapes, mountains, traditional clothing, and architecture.
- Learn about Romanian history and traditions. There are numerous videos available on YouTube that include brief but effective information.
- Listen to and watch recordings of Romanian folk music and dance.

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

- Identify the structure of the piece in addition to any transitional material, repetition, and key and meter variations.
- Watch carefully for the frequent and various types of articulation markings throughout. These nuances are important to fully capture the essence of the folk influence.
- Take the time to establish proper fingering: some areas are intuitive while others are not.

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

- Five finger patterns, hands together, with one hand staccato and one hand legato can be an effective exercise for different simultaneous articulations between the hands.
- Practice smaller sections in repetition with careful attention on pedaling. Accurate pedaling, especially precise releases of the pedal, are crucial to the clarity of the various articulations.
- For some of the more complex syncopations, count out loud in subdivisions to get

rhythms accurate and consistent.

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

- Return to the introductory activity of creating a robust imagery of Romanian culture by exploring photographs of Romanian landscapes, mountains, traditional clothing, and architecture. Having a specific image in mind can give a great amount of character and meaning to these works.
- Along with the imagery, try to imagine what action or activity is taking place amidst this mental picture.
- Fermatas and breaths between phrases are a common device in these pieces and crucial in their expression. Take time and freedom for these long sounds to indulge and resonate. Let the silences hold the listener on the edge of their seat, waiting for what is next.

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

- Practice without the damper pedal to get a strong handle on the different articulations and phrasing first.
- When the pedal is added, listen for clarity of the articulations and melody. Be sure that the pedaling is not impacting the effect of the various articulations or blurring sounds together that should not be blurred.
- Loud and soft sounds alone are not enough! Explore the whole palette of potential dynamics and tone, and carefully plan how and when to use them.