



A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource

Rebecca Pennington presents:
Ballade, Op.100 No.15 by F. Burgmüller

Process and Practice

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

- Continue to connect the piece to the idea of an "epic story." The student can make their own story to connect with the music, and it's okay if this story changes over time. Going back to the idea of a story will keep the music fresh!
- As the student becomes more comfortable with the piece, the tempo can increase. This changes the piece for the student and keeps it fresh and alive.
- There are endless details to find within a phrase. One of my favorites is in the coda, once a student has learned the piece securely. The four repetitions of the motive in the coda each get louder, building drama and intensity to the end of the piece.

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

- This piece has obvious breaks or sections. This is helpful in isolating particular areas to practice further, depending on what the student needs. Even the major sections like A and B can each be broken down into at least four sections.

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

- In the B section, each phrase is slightly different, but still part of the same idea. The first phrase is like a question, the second like an answer.
- The main motive is a unifying theme in that it reappears throughout the piece, even at the coda!

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

- The coda tempo will govern the flow of the whole piece. How fast can you play the coda accurately, evenly and with unity between the hands? This is your starting tempo.
- Be careful that the descending broken chords do not rush!

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

- Continue to connect the piece to a personal story. The students could even write the story out themselves—perhaps make their own written "ballade."

Deep knowing: tips for securing memory

- Be able to start from three different spots on each page.
- Be able to play the piece from memory at three or more different tempos.
- Be able to play the coda "cold" from memory.

- Be able to name the LH chords in the B section.

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

- Play for others and have them share what the story is about.
- Perform the piece at different tempos.
- Record the performance. Students could tell their story while the piece plays in the background.