



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource

Hannah Roberts presents:

Five Scottish Folk Songs: I. "Land o' the Leal," V. "Eilidh Bhan" by Helen Hopekirk

Process and Practice

Fully Present: tips for maintaining focus and engagement over time

- Explore the musical characteristics that define Scottish folk music, defined in Hopekirk's introduction to *Seventy Scottish Songs*. Identify these elements within the score.
- Imagine interpretive ideas that are significantly different from the student's current interpretation. Try playing these and discuss why or why not these ideas might be appropriate.

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

- Practice each stanza independently, taking care to depict a unique character for each one.
- Practice the RH alone, focusing on melodic voicing, articulation, and phrase shaping.
- Practice the leaping LH passages alone, checking for efficient fingering and position shifts.

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

- Outline the phrase structure for the piece, searching for repeating motives and phrases.
- Pay attention to countermelodies. Shape and voice these thoughtfully.

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

- Conduct the piece while singing the melody, exploring how to pace the *ritardando* and tempo markings. Translate this to the piano by playing the melody in the RH and conducting with the LH.
- Experiment with the pacing of crescendos and diminuendos, searching for natural and coherent phrasing.
- Before starting the piece, look ahead to the entrance of the folk melody. Sing the melody silently; then, be sure to match the tempo of the introduction to the desired tempo of the melody.

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

- Set the given lyrics aside and imagine personalized lyrics for each song.
- Explore various inflections of chromatic lines and inner voices.

Deep knowing: tips for securing memory

- Sing or hum the melody while playing only the accompaniment.
- Create a mental map of important harmonic progressions and cadences.
- Perform the piece on different pianos to practice adapting to the touch and sound of each instrument.

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

- Revisit the original lyrics from Hopekirk's Seventy Scottish Songs. Is the final interpretation still true to the piece's meaning?
- Explore Hopekirk's vocal arrangements of these folk songs.
- Perform for friends and family. Ask what imagery or emotions the piece evokes for them.