



# Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource

## Omar Roy Presents:

### “Lullaby for Linus” from *Peanuts Gallery* by Ellen Taaffe Zwilich

#### Preparation and Presentation

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

- Vladimir Rebikov: *Rocking*, Op. 31 No. 7
- Edward MacDowell: *To a Wild Rose*, Op. 51 No. 1
- Franz Schubert: Valse Noble in A minor, D. 969/Op. 77 no .9

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

- Introduce the student to Linus and the cast of Peanuts characters – highlight Schroeder’s connection to the piano.
- Familiarize the student with American composer Ellen Taaffe Zwilich (b. 1939) and some of her other compositions to introduce her harmonic language.
- This is, originally, a concertante type work, written for piano and orchestra – listen to an orchestral recording to hear the layers of the musical texture. If the student finds the music compelling, take time to listen to other pieces from Ellen Taaffe Zwilich’s *Peanuts Gallery*.

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

- Identify recurring motives or themes: The LH two-note slur pattern of ascending thirds (m. 1), the theme introduced in m. 4, and the large descending scale beginning in m. 20.
- Use these motives and themes to decipher the form of the piece. There are a number of ways in which to think about the piece structurally: Students may perceive it as being through-composed, being a loose ternary form, or even a binary form with elements of rounding that resemble a “closing.”
- Identify the climax of the piece, occurring in mm. 29-34, and the rising action leading to it. Because the form of the piece isn’t as clearly defined as something from the Baroque or Classical eras, students can use the climax as a structural reference point.

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

- Shaping the two-note slur figure in the LH across the bar-line, and maintaining its consistency throughout the piece.
- Holding a central note while simultaneously playing arpeggiations or other melodic figures around it – emphasizing relaxation and freedom of movement (mm. 16-17, 43).

- Practice the broken chord figures in mm. 25, 37, 39, and 43 legato to encourage the student to think about how to shape these figures before reverting back to staccato.

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

- Try to mimic certain sounds in the orchestral recording – especially the descending glissandi in the low strings from mm. 21-24.
- Emphasize dynamic pacing leading to the climax, and the gradual decay through the end of the piece.
- Try Teacher-Student Duets, where the student is only responsible for a single hand. This allows the student to focus on shaping a single line, rather than two contradicting gestures, while still hearing the full tonal picture.

**Look Forward:** approaches to set up for success with refinements that will need attention a few weeks down the road

- Shape the RH melodic lines independently of the LH two-note slurs.
- Determine proper use (including coloristic use) of pedal to aid legato and vary sound.
- Pay close attention to Zwilich's deliberately long pedal markings!