



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource

Omar Roy Presents:

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

Process and Practice

Fully present: tips for maintaining focus and engagement over time

- Fine-tune the shaping of smaller figures such as the alternating eighth notes in mm. 27 and 33-34. Does the student feel them as a longer line or as a series of two-note slurs?
- When starting the piece, think ahead: How can the first introduction of melody in m. 4 relate to its return in m. 46?

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

- Mm. 19-24: Practice melodic line with rolled chords, while omitting the descending 5ths in the bass clef to internalize how the rolled chords fit the melody. Then, reincorporate the lower registers while maintaining the same sensation of separate parts of the texture.
- Use the "jump and stop" technique to drill large jumps in the LH and RH (mm. 22-23, 27-28, 29-31).

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

- Refer, again, to the orchestral recording: what parts in this piano arrangement were originally played by other instruments, and how did they fit into the overall balance of the musical texture?
- Play through sections multiple times while listening to different layers each time. Listen for continuity of line, tone color, and articulation.

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

- Start a section at the desired tempo and jump around to different sections of the piece to see how that tempo feels in each section. This will help the student map out their pulse through sections of the piece.
- Play through the entire piece with a metronome and make note of places where judicious use of rubato would benefit both expressivity and technical fluency.
- Try playing through the entire piece several times, each time with a different tempo. Make note about what you like about each tempo and find strategies to incorporate those same expressive qualities into your "ideal" tempo.

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

- While the quarter note beats need to remain consistent, there is room for flexibility and experimentation with the timing of eighth notes in melodic figures.
- Refine the sense of tone color for each section of the piece: Where are the best places for the tone production to be more “hazy” or “dreamy”, and where are the best places for the tone color to be very “bright” and “clear”?

Deep knowing: tips for securing memory

- Continue to practice the piece hands separately, and in sections. It’s especially helpful to “work backwards” by starting with the last section, and building towards the beginning of the piece.
- Try starting a section, stopping the physical act of playing but continuing to play mentally, and bringing the hands back in near the end of the phrase. Often, memory slips happen in the middle or near the end of a phrase – not the beginning!

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

- Record yourself or your student frequently as “practice” performances to simulate the pressure of real performance and expose any areas that do not feel totally secure.
- Maintain freshness by trying musical ideas that are contrary to the dynamics and articulations in the score, even if they sound weird. Experimentation can lead to interesting interpretations!