



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource

Cathy Smetana presents:

Musette in D major from Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach, BWV Anh. 126

Composer: unknown, though often attributed to J. S. Bach

Process and Practice

Fully Present: Tips for maintaining focus and engagement over time

- Experiment with different articulations and dynamic plans
- Transpose at least the A Section to different keys
- Play pieces with similar musical and technical issues: Kabalevsky's Clowns, op. 39 no. 20; Bourlesq from Notebook for Wolfgang (the version with octaves in LH)

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

- Suggested practice sections: mm. 1-8, 9-12, 13-16, 17-20
- Once each section has been practiced on its own, connect them by adding the first note of the next section
- Practice the obvious tricky moves (like mm. 2-3), but also the hidden tricky spot (like mm. 4-5)
- Measures 18-19 are often the most challenging; practice them "add-on style" (start with m. 17 plus the first note of m. 18, then go to the second note of m. 18, etc. until the section is secure)

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

- Practice mm. 9-20 extra so students are as comfortable and confident with that section as they are with the "easier" A section
- Understand the I-V-V/V-V-I harmonic progression that drives the entire piece

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

- Choose tempo based on the section that is most challenging for the student
- Listen for clear, even sixteenth notes

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

- Give students as much artistic autonomy as they are prepared to handle; allow them to experiment with and choose different articulations, dynamics, and tempi as appropriate
- Ask students to assign "character words" to each section (confident, strong, playful, coy, etc.) - alternately, allow students to assign colors, instruments, and/or a storyline that connects them to the piece

Deep knowing: Tips for securing memory

- Students must be able to start at the beginning of each major phrase
- Practice the piece “call-and-response style” - teacher plays a phrase, student plays the next phrase by memory; then switch!

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

- Ask students to play the piece at least three different ways, allowing them to change tempo, articulation, and dynamics
- Allow students to experiment with different registers; what if the piece started in the middle of the keyboard, then the hands moved away from each other?
- Highlight the jazzy elements of the piece by assigning Renfrow’s Ragtime Musette or encouraging students to make up their own version of the piece
- Teach Kabalevsky’s Clowns (op. 39 no. 20) when Musette is performance ready; they share many common challenges and characteristics which will help keep Musette fresh