Inspiring Artistry
Repertoire Project

A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource

Andy Villemez presents:
La fille aux cheveux de lin, **from Préludes, Book 1, L.117/8 by Claude Debussy**

Preparation and Presentation

Context: Pieces that are helpful to have experienced or played before approaching this one.
- F. Mendelssohn, Song Without Words in E Major, Op. 30 No. 3
- E. MacDowell, from Woodland Sketches, To a Wild Rose Op. 51 No. 1
- P. Tchaikovsky, Morning Prayer Op. 39 No. 1
- F. Burgmüller, Consolation, Op. 100 no. 13

Get Ready: Creative activities to explore before the first encounter with the score, to prepare a student for deeper engagement and more immediate success.
- Identify narrative elements (character(s), mood, action, etc.) of the music with or without reference to the title of the prelude
- Listen to different instrumental arrangements of the song to experience different timbres and aural references to try and imitate on the piano
- Use rote technical exercises to explore timbre and controlling sound

Initial Focus: Features to pay attention to first; priority steps in reading and absorbing the music
- Identify overall structure, phrases, and tempo markings/changes
- Find and translate all French (and some Italian) into the language the student is most comfortable with

Coordination Essentials: Physical skills and drills for common technical challenges in the piece
- Rote exercise on dynamic shading in vertical texture (see video)
- Rote exercise on sustain pedal control (see video)
- Rote exercise exploring timbre control (see video)

Expressivity: Ideas to connect and re-connect with the expressive and musical nature of the piece
- Establishing narrative connection related or unrelated to prelude title
- Offer descriptive words for timbre options

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

- Make preparatory decisions on how phrases/sections have different color and mood identifiers. This can be as simple as "darker or brighter" or "rounder or sharper."