



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource

Ann M. Gipson presents:

“The Boys’ Round Dance” from *Children’s Christmas Eve*, Op. 36 by Niels Gade

Preparation and Presentation

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

- Dmitry Kabalevsky: Little Scherzo, Op. 39, No. 6
- Cornelius Gurlitt: Etude in D Major, Op. 82, No. 47
- Robert Schumann: Little Study, Op. 68, No. 14
- J.S. Bach: Minuet in D Major, BWV Anh. 126
- Friedrich Burgmüller: “Angel’s Voices,” Op. 100, No. 21

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

- Explore Danish folk dances available on YouTube to visualize the frequent change of dance steps in this piece.
- Learn and practice the natural, harmonic, and melodic forms of an A minor scale.
- Explore the broken chord passages in m. 9-12 from an abstract (or map) of chord symbols. Play the chords blocked.

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

- The overall form of this piece is ABA1. Identify and label the large sections.
- Compare and label each 4-measure phrase of the A section: a a1 b b transition.
- Looking at the score, locate the chords explored from the abstract in step 2 and write chord symbols on the score.

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

- A section: Parallel motion (mm. 1-2, 5-6, 17-18, 31-32, 39-40). Use a “drop and roll forward” gesture followed by a forearm bounce.
- A section: Scales passages (mm. 3-4, 7-8, 33-34): Plan fingering and write in score for consistency.
- A section: Broken chords (mm. 9-11, 13-15, 35-37): Plan fingering for fluid circular gestures.
- B section: Melody/accompaniment (mm. 19-22, 27-30): Plan RH finger to facilitate circular gestures. For the LH staccato accompaniment, use a light wrist bounce.
- B section: Parallel motion (mm. 23-24): Plan fingering for fluid circular gestures.

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

- Exaggerate the accents throughout the piece.
- Isolate cadences (mm. 4, 8, 12, 16, 30, 34, 38) to develop strong, rhythmic phrase endings.
- Experiment with adding *crescendos/decrescendos* in the scalar passages and broken chord passages.

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

- Plan fingering and physical gestures needed in each section.
- Carefully count the frequent rhythmic changes.
- Listen for sudden dynamic changes.
- Establish accuracy and precision of notes, rhythms, and articulation with slow practice.
- Listen for clarity of pedal.