



# Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

*A Piano Magazine subscriber-exclusive digital resource*

## **Curtis Pavey presents: Prelude in A Minor by Maurice Ravel**

### **Preparation and Presentation**

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

- Johann Sebastian Bach: Invention No. 1 in C Major
- Felix Mendelssohn: "Consolation" Op. 30, No. 3 from Songs Without Words
- Nkeiru Okoye: Dusk
- Nadia Boulanger: Petite pièce pour piano No. 2
- Claude Debussy: "The Little Shepherd" from Children's Corner

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

- Improvise with interlocked hand positions with the LH on top of the RH (ideas demonstrated in video)
- Introduce and explore the sounds of extended tertian chords and chromatic alterations
- Listen to music by Ravel and other Impressionist composers, noting interesting harmonies, textures, and effects

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

- Locate the major sections of this form (ABA') and divide further into practice sections
- Notice the differences between the two A sections
- Notice the registral change in the B section (LH is in the treble clef!)
- Remind the student that the LH will be on top of the RH in the B section
- Plan fingering for both the RH and LH in the B section
- Locate different harmonies that will require pedal changes

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

- Learn and practice left hand arpeggios, three octaves, focusing on creating a smooth, legato line with a decrescendo
- Generate rote exercises to explore interlocked hand positions (especially LH over the RH)
- Review legato third fingerings (especially in the LH)
- Develop fluency with octave scales and intervallic-based patterns in octaves
- Practice voicing the top note of RH chords and octaves

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

- Sing the RH melody aloud (perhaps while playing the bassline), listening for dissonance and resolution
- Isolate the RH melody alone to create a lyrical, yet melancholic sound
- Explore LH arpeggios by focusing on a smooth, legato line with a decrescendo
- Listen for long pedals when needed, but otherwise, listen for clean harmonies

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

- Plan fingering for both the RH and LH in the B section
- Listen for clarity of pedal
- Notice *ralenti* and other tempo modifications
- Carefully listen for a singing RH melody throughout