



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Inspires digital resource

Molly Thomas Presents:

“Little Sister” from *Suite for the Young* by Norman Dello Joio

Preparation and Presentation

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

- “The Little Triton” by Andrea Granitzio from *Mosaic, Vol. 1*—this piece is like “Little Sister,” because it is also in a dance-like triple meter but does not exceed a five-finger pattern.
- “Sailing Under a Moonlit Sky” by Alison Mathews—this is in triple meter and requires a considerable amount of legato, which will prepare a smooth and connected melody for “Little Sister.”

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

- Improvisation with stepwise motion in G major with a teacher accompaniment
- Movement activity: Have the student feel a strong pulse on the downbeat in triple meter (teacher can play accompaniment for aural support).

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

- Ensure the student does not try to play the left hand in the bass clef.
- If something sounds dissonant, assure the student that it is still correct; because this piece is from the twentieth century, the student may encounter strange harmonies. Ask them to play through things carefully, especially when initially learning the notes.
- Remind students that they should not start the piece too softly. Seeing the *piano* dynamic at the beginning may lead them to play too quietly, which will make shaping difficult.

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

- When ties are written over the bar line, have the student hold the first note of each two-note group, then play the following note, enforcing the tie. Do this out of rhythm first.
- Finger crossing and finger substitution exercises: The fingering of this piece is deceptively difficult. Students should practice separate measures using the listed fingering before trying it in context.

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

- Play the melodic line alone to imitate a beautiful singing voice.
- Take each two-measure phrase out of context. Play them apart from each other and begin combining them into groups. Different combinations will help students create multiple options for phrasing and dynamic contrast.

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

- Students can play each of the voices separately and begin shaping the accompaniment parts as well.
- Balance for the G major chord at the end of the piece may be difficult. By pausing at the *fermata* and listening for balance and voicing, the student can ensure they are playing the top note the loudest.