



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Inspires digital resource

Jordan Karrigan Presents:

Douce Amie from Album pour les tout-petits, Op. 103 by Mel Bonis

Preparation and Presentation

Context: pieces that are helpful to have experienced or played before approaching this one
For Impromptu Op. 5 No. 5:

- Cécile Chaminade: "Aubade," Op. 140
- Jacques Ibert: "L'Adieu" from Petite suite en 15 images
- Aram Khachaturian: Andantino ("Ivan Sings") from Album for Children, Vol. 1
- Edward MacDowell: "To A Wild Rose" from 10 Woodland Sketches, Op. 51
- Robert Schumann: "The Happy Farmer," No. 10 from Album for Young, Op. 68

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

- Improvise using sequences based on the melodic material while using the same accompaniment scheme throughout the piece.
- Experiment with basic triads by adding extra notes to explore new sounds that still relate to the piece, helping to understand the purpose of these additional notes in chords.

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

- Keep the repeated note accompaniment soft, sustained, and subdued above the melody, using it to shape musical ideas without allowing each note to sound the same.
- Pay attention to the subtle differences in the melody, such as the slight extension of the thumb and the ties between notes, especially in passages like page 1, system two.
- Work with color chords and non-chord tones to create a "blurring" effect, helping the ear adjust to these sounds and guiding hand placement for each chord while incorporating non-chord tones.
- Maintain balance and voicing as the melody shifts from the left hand to the right hand in the B section, ensuring smooth transitions while playing.

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

- Play one part while the other plays the contrasting part in a hands-separate duet, helping to acclimate the ear to the melody above the accompaniment, with attention to specific touches for each part.
- Achieve soft and sustained accompaniment by keeping the fingers "glued" to the keys with gentle lifts and drops, both with and without the pedal, to emphasize the sustained nature of the sound.

- Coordinate varying arm weights by using a heavy lift and drop for the melodic line with a tenuto touch, while using a light "pluck" sensation in the accompaniment.
- Facilitate arm weight coordination by playing either the melody or the accompaniment, doubled between the hands, such as playing the accompaniment in the right hand or the melody in the left hand while playing hands together.

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

- "Calme et expressif, le chant en dehors" indicates that while the piece should be expressive, it should also remain "calm," avoiding dramatic or large shaping, except for a tasteful build in the B section where indicated.
- Despite its expressive nature, the piece should not be overly sentimental or excessively rubato. The message, intended for a "sweet friend," is simply a warm and meaningful sentiment, not requiring exaggerated musical expression.
- Once balance and voicing are established, aim for a reserved dolce touch to maintain the "calmness" while addressing the challenges of balance and voicing.

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

- Select supplementary repertoire that complements the slow, demure, and expressive nature of this piece, with a quicker tempo, snappier, and potentially "flashier" piece to work alongside it.
- Incorporate exercises that focus on balance and voicing, such as scales with different articulations in each hand (e.g., legato in the left hand, staccato in the right hand), and playing blocked intervals and triads softly in a repetitive manner.
- Ensure a solid understanding of basic harmonic relationships, as Bonis uses standard harmonic practices with non-chord tones for color; it is beneficial to explore how Bonis subtly alters chords to add color while recognizing these harmonic structures.