



# Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Inspires digital resource

## Kaden Larson Presents: Impromptus Op. 5 Nos. 5-6 by Sibelius

### Process and Practice

**Fully present:** tips for maintaining focus and engagement over time

For both pieces:

- Listen to how Sibelius combined both impromptus into an arrangement for string orchestra titled simply Impromptu for Strings. This reimagination of both pieces can be a powerfully engaging way to rethink interpretation, color, and character.
- Experiment with playing each piece at different kinds of tempo, and listen to what different elements can be brought out with each. Ask questions of meter and phrase length in this exercise.

**Break it up:** useful practice segments; how to connect them and plug them back into the whole

For Impromptu Op. 5 No. 5:

- Each texturally-different type of arpeggio section needs separate practice. Evaluate what kinds of rotational movement are needed in each from a technical standpoint, and practice transitions between these sections.
- In the middle section where the LH takes the bell-tone melody, there are lots of opportunities for expressive rubato that also help the shifting of RH fingering.

For Impromptu Op. 5 No. 6:

- Practice the RH octave melodies alone; do one note at a time too, and listen to how the character of the music changes depending on which octave note is highlighted.

**Layers and outlines:** tips for focusing on how the parts makeup the whole

For Impromptu Op. 5 No. 5:

- Listen to how the LH melody in the middle bell section relates to the main theme from the opening.
- Compare both static arpeggio sextuplet sections; key area, place in the form, and expressive potential.

For Impromptu Op. 5 No. 6:

- Understand the binary nature of the form in terms of key; how does the mood change?
- Compare the placement of the bar line fermata with where it would go if placed in the first half of the piece too.

**Achieving flow:** ideas for finding and maintaining tempo, managing modifications artistically  
For Impromptu Op. 5 No. 5:

- Use a quick flow and pause method in small bursts to attain easy velocity, gradually trying larger passages.
- Identify where the hands are playing one at a time, and where they are together. Does this change in texture warrant a change in tempo?

For Impromptu Op. 5 No. 6:

- Practice the LH alone a lot; experiment with the opportunity for creative rubato and shaping in the RH, but the LH needs to be like an anchor to the momentum of the piece.

**Make it mine:** tips for developing and refining a personal, internal sense of the piece

For Impromptu Op. 5 No. 5:

- What tempo is appropriate? Think about the idea of fading away the ending; there's a steady kinetic energy for the whole piece, and here it really is dying away.
- Listen for dynamic bumps in all arpeggios; practice shaping each small slur very slowly.

For Impromptu Op. 5 No. 6:

- Really listen to the sudden and colorful harmonic shifts. Try transposing this piece to a different key and listen to how that might change things.
- How does each chord transform and relate to one another?

For both:

- Experiment with reharmonizing the melody. What would you do differently?

**Deep knowing:** tips for securing memory

For Impromptu Op. 5 No. 5:

- Practice in blocked chords.
- Outline big sections and identify specific changes. Sometimes, the only changes in a repeated section are to the kinds of inversions used in the arpeggios.
- Play the arpeggios with only one finger at a time. Can you still remember all of the notes?

For Impromptu Op. 5 No. 6:

- Learn to sing the melody by heart. Accompany yourself with generic blocked chords as you sing.

For both:

- Practice in altered rhythms.

**Final stages:** tips for ensuring performance readiness, maintaining freshness and spontaneity, and reinforcing an expressive personal connection

For both:

- Practice performing these pieces both individually and as a set. Reverse the order.
- Find images of Finnish landscapes that you feel connect to the music. Then find some different images.
- Don't be afraid to put these pieces away for a couple of days and then come back to them with fresh ears.
- Find places in the music that make you smile, or make you feel some other emotion. Write it in the score or draw something to remind you. Remember that emotional memory is powerful, and that it can influence your shaping and phrasing more spontaneously than a simple planned dynamic event.