



# Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Inspires digital resource

## **Penny Lazarus Presents: Following from Faces of Jazz by Hale Smith**

### **Process and Practice**

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

- The word following has two meanings: one means sequential action, that is, a synonym for something coming immediately after. This is the root of the meaning of the two parts in a round or voices in a two-part invention. The word following also means having trust and belief in someone who leads. Another musical form uses this concept: the musical technique integral to African folk music and many Southern Baptist religious practices in the United States known as Call and Response. In this musical form, the first phrase asks a question, and the second phrase provides an answer. Call and Response is like a conversation between multiple participants—a call for belief that is then returned. So, imagine this two-part invention as representing two people. The left-hand starts the conversation, and the right hand follows. Try to hear and sing the melody line in your mind as you play through the phrases to support a proper musical forward flow
- Create a character for the left hand that calls and leads and one for the right hand that follows and responds. Create different characters for each hand; someone who is hesitant; someone who is full of confidence; someone who is shy; someone who is excited; someone who is sad; someone who needs prodding or someone who can't wait to respond! In Hale Smith's composition, what happens at the end of the piece? Does the hand who leads, change?

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

- Number the measures!
- In the exposition and the recapitulation, practice in two measure segments being careful to notice when the right hand follows the left hand immediately or when there is a beat in-between.
- Practice measures 1 through 8 until flow is achieved. Follow this with the left hand of measures 19 through 22 and, finally, the last 6 measures of the piece. Become equally comfortable with each of these transpositions.
- Practice the development section, first hands alone and then together.

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

- With colored washi tape, mark measures 7-9 and then measures 19-22. Only remove the tape when these connecting measures are as smooth as the rest of the piece.

**Achieving flow:** ideas for finding and maintaining tempo, managing modifications artistically

- The most difficult section for maintaining tempo is the bridge between the development and the recapitulation, measures 19-22. Finger the right hand's Dsus2 chord 2,3 and 5. Practice these measures with a slow metronome tempo and gradually work to a faster tempo. Stop and repeat if the chords are not played smoothly and evenly.
- Using a metronome, work with the whole piece, checking that the timing between the hands is correct. Make sure that extra beats are not added during difficult passage work between the hands. Do the pulses stay in place without the use of the metronome?

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

- Who do you admire?
- Write a short story about someone you admire and what you would want to emulate.
- How can you incorporate your own experience into this piece?
- Draw a dynamic graph: Using graph paper, mark the measures of the piece on an X-axis. Use the vertical line, the Y-axis, to mark a dynamic range from soft to loud. What happens to the dynamics during the duration of this piece? How would your story fit with the progression of dynamics in this piece?
- Exaggerate the articulations and dynamics.
- Play around with the response between the left hand and the right hand. Now you can loosen up the timing so that this piece has more of an improvisatory feel and is no longer rigid.

**Deep knowing:** tips for securing memory

- Create an index card for each section of the piece. Mix these up and practice out of order until each section is just as secure as the beginning of the piece.
- Play a section of the piece, then stop and place your hands in your lap. Count to 5 and start playing again exactly where you stopped. Keep doing this until the wait time between sections becomes so long you can walk across the room and come back to the piano and pick up immediately where you left off!
- Play each hand by itself from memory.

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

- Listen to Duet for One by Christopher Norton, Microjazz Collection 1 on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6dxjQlho9o>
- What do you think the title "A Duet for One" means?
- What would Following sound like if only one voice was present?
- Following is not yet recorded on YouTube. Be the first person to post a video of this piece! Record several times, changing the character of each hand.