



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Piano Inspires digital resource

Heidi Saario presents:

The Spruce op.75 no.5 from Five Pieces op.75 by Jean Sibelius

Preparation and Presentation

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

- E. Grieg: Solitary Traveler op.32 no.2
- F. Mendelssohn: Consolation op.30 no.3
- E. Grieg: Poetic Tone Picture op.3 nr.1

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

- Listen to the piece and discuss the name “The Spruce”; how does the music convey an image of a majestic spruce tree?
- Find photos/paintings of Finnish forests and landscapes to experience what inspired the composer
- Learn some biographical information about the composer and about his famous orchestral works

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

- Break it down to shorter sections
- Discuss the characteristics of each section
- Make sure the fingering is carefully planned
- Figure out how to play the rhythm correctly hands together

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

- Rhythm: learn to play the rhythm accurately hands together in a steady tempo before adding rubato or voicing strategies; practice tapping the rhythm on your lap with both hands while counting aloud
- Chord blocking for better security: block the notes of the chords in each hand in the opening measure as well as in the complete Risoluto section Measures 24-28: Figure out the position of the LH in each measure (over/under the RH)
- Play LH top note B in the chord in m.5 with the RH (together with C#) if you can't reach all the notes of the LH chord

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

- Think orchestrally, imagine which orchestral instrument might play each individual melody and accompanying harmonies
- Plan how to use rubato in each phrase

- Develop a warm, and resonant tone to play the melody notes in measures 2-14 and be careful not to play the accompanying chords too heavily in each hand

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

- Listen to some more orchestral music by Jean Sibelius to become familiar with his style and character
- Continue refining voicing in each individual section
- Continue refining your pedaling skills
- Continue working on an expressive rubato throughout the piece