

Inspiring Artistry

Andrea McAlister presents Clowns, op. 39, no. 20 by Dmitri Kabalevsky

Process and Practice

Tips for maintaining focus and engagement over time:

- Draw different faces in the score to indicate contrasting moods, which can vary from performance to performance.
- Embody chosen characters with facial expressions, while playing.

Useful practice segments; how to connect them and plug them back into the whole:

- Practice the A Major/minor sections (mm. 1-4, 5-8, 18-21) together to discover and show how they are similar and different.
- Individual practice for:
 - mm. 9-12 in F Major/minor
 - mm. 13-17 transition
 - mm. 22-25 coda

Tips for focusing on how the parts make up the whole:

- Identify where 5-note patterns occur and how they change throughout the piece. How are they different in the A M/m and the F M/m sections?
- Identify the key areas.
- Point out where the left hand pattern changes.

Ideas for finding and maintaining tempo, managing modifications artistically:

- Think of the LH as a metronome to keep the beat steady.
- Aim for a joking, clownish tempo; choose one that brings out the character and isn't too fast.

Tips for developing and refining a personal, internal sense of the piece:

- Exaggerate the articulations and dynamics.
- Allow some time (stretch) in m. 17 before returning to the first theme.

Tips for securing memory:

- Memorize the piece in its key areas.
- Note where the A section changes and leads to the Coda (m. 22).

Tips for ensuring performance readiness, maintaining freshness and spontaneity, and reinforcing an expressive personal connection:

- Draw multiple characters for each section and choose a different combination for successive performances.