



Inspiring Artistry Repertoire Project

A Clavier Companion subscriber-exclusive digital resource

Luis Sanchez presents:

Mis Amigos: No. 8, Casandra, by Carlos Guastavino

Preparation and Presentation

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

- Khachaturian – Ivan Sings
- McDowell – To a Wild Rose, Op. 51, No. 1
- Chopin: Prelude in E minor, Op. 28, No. 4

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

- Introduce the student to the phrygian mode since it is present in numerous moments throughout the piece.
- Musicianship skills, like sight-reading, composition, and improvisation can help familiarize the student with these modes.
- If this composer is unknown to the student, invite them to explore important facts about their life and country of origin.

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

- The LH poses the greatest difficulty in this piece. Spend time in the lesson identifying pedal points and moving voices in each chord.
- Develop freedom of the wrist to prevent heaviness in the execution of chords, that will create a static performance of the piece.
- Work on legato touch of five-finger patterns with close attention to control of melodic shape.

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

- Divide the piece in four-measure phrases and drill the LH chords, while you sing the melody with and without the student.
- Enhance coordination skills by having the student tap the LH rhythm while playing the RH.
- Encourage a legato touch for the RH that follows the contour of the melody with subtle crescendos and diminuendos that bring out the singing quality of the line.

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

- Invite the student to describe the emotion the piece communicates.
- Bring out the melodic quality of the LH to compliment the rhythmic ostinato.

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

- Instill in the student the importance of slow practice and careful observation of LH accidentals.
- Seek different shades of expression as the composer makes subtle changes to the melody with the use of accidentals, like m. 13 and 19.
- Explore the idea of dynamics as stronger or weaker degrees of emotional expression, not solely as louder and softer playing.