

Piano Masterclass
With Professor Brian Ganz
IIMIF 2020 - July 8

Liana

Pictures at an Exhibition by Mussorgsky

- This piece is based on the paintings of Victor Hartman, Mussorgsky's friend.
- Promenade
 - Funny time signature = funny walking
 - Open and majestic harmonies - clean and independent. Try changing pedal on every harmony to hear the harmonic changes better
 - Don't short change the last chord :) - imagine that there is another chord after the final chord to create a fuller, more complete ending
- The Gnome
 - Don't let accents hide what's in between them
 - Loosening: let your arms relax by your sides, then wiggle them (done whenever practicing staccato)
 - Practice opening motif in rhythms to give attention to every note
 - The eighth rests add vitality to the mood of the piece
- The Old Castle
 - Chopin was an inspiration for Mussorgsky and the other Russian Five
 - Don't cut any notes short, count all the way to six and don't enter early
 - Enjoy the weight of that D# as a final 'amen' to the audience
- The Tuileries
 - Gardens near the Louvre in Paris where there once was a palace - 'children quarreling after play'
 - Add quarreling 'spice' - don't pedal through staccatos

Bella

Chopin Scherzo No. 2

- Scherzo - a practical joke, a trick
- "How is gravity to clothe itself if levity goes about in such dark garments?"
-Schumann on the first three scherzi
- What is scherzo-like in this piece if not its humor/lightness?
 - Tumultuousness
 - Quicksilver contrasts (sotto voce vs. fortissimo)
- What if tapering loud phrases take away from these contrasts? Try continuing the tumultuousness to the end of the phrase
- Chopin's accents are gigantic! They can look like diminuendos, so be aware of whenever you see one, it could be an accent!

- *Con anima* - with soul
- Sostenuto doesn't mean you need to over-relax rhythmic connections. Maintain subdivisions!
- Great voicing and honoring note values!
- Rubato requires a good grip on the 'clay' (like a potter) or structure of a piece in order to be successful
- Music lies in the spaces between the notes
- *Slentando* - gradually slowing down
- In the middle section, be aware of certain tied and held notes in the melody (F# using 3-5 finger substitution)
- During the switch to c# minor to E major, hold onto the last two notes of the c# minor, then transition to the new mood
- Make sure your listener knows where your departure takes place
- Big intervals -> more tension!

Audrey

Schumann Fantasy in C Major mvmt. 1

- Robert was in love with Clara, but her father disapproved, so Schumann called this piece a 'passionate lament' for Clara.
- Quote at the beginning translation "All the tones that sound in Earth's multicolored dream, contain one soft sound for the secret listener."
- Another inspiration behind this piece: Beethoven's song cycle (The Ode to the Distant Beloved)
- Strengths carried too far can become weaknesses. Too much freedom can become a weakness because you lose the connection between sections, notes, phrases, etc.
- Creating intimacy is a strength, but becoming too intimate can create a divide between listener and performer
- Don't lose momentum by slowing down too much (start at the beginning to establish tempo, then jump to spots where slowing down is common)
- There is a danger of losing sound between contrasting sections (either by taking too much time or ending the first section too quietly)
- Maintain vitality via pedal usage
- Get to know the song cycle to catch all of the allusions
- Refresh the tempo during the final chords so that they don't die