

practice & performance

No. 1 10

La candeur (*Honesty*)

A smooth circular motion from the wrist will enable a fluid performance of this study. When incorporating wrist circles for the first time, try the following exercise on the closed piano lid.

Rest the eight longer fingers on the lid while the thumbs hang off of the edge. Make an over-shape toward both thumbs, then loop under and outward to complete the circle while shifting weight from the thumb side of the hand toward the fifth finger. (The left wrist will move in clockwise circles, while the right moves counterclockwise.) The elbow acts as a “shadow” of the wrist: allow the elbow to float behind the wrist and follow in its circling motion, but initiate this motion only in the wrist.

To begin implementing this in the piece, repeat measure (m.) 9 several times in a row. Both hands will make identical motions in this measure: an over-shape over the first four notes, followed by a brief “reset”—a quick under-shape when the notes jump back outward by a fifth.

Be aware of when to use this circular motion versus a few instances of forearm rotation (i.e., right hand (RH) at the beginning of m. 7, left hand (LH) second half of m. 10).

Phrase the upper RH line in mm. 13–14 in three dynamic levels. Practice isolating these notes, landing with a beautiful arm tone on each one, while climbing in dynamic toward the *sf* on A. Then add the inner RH line, being sure to sustain the melody note and keep the eighth notes soft underneath.

No. 2 12

Arabesque

Much like the previous study, this study also tests the pianist’s fluency with wrist circles. More challenging, however, are the articulation patterns. Here, it is important to choreograph the motions of the wrist: always downward and flexible at the beginning of a slur and moving weightlessly upward at the end of a slur, or bouncing upward on isolated *staccato* notes.

Practice the various RH articulations, in particular mm. 7–10, with the lid closed in order to focus on the motion of the wrist. Long melody notes (such as the quarter note in m. 8 tied into m. 9, or the dotted quarter notes beginning in m. 12) will be most expressive with a follow-through (roll forward, as if leaving a fingerprint on the key). Then, a rotation into the eighth note that follows will transfer weight through the phrase. Be sure to practice the jumps in mm. 31–33 hands separately as well as with eyes closed for security.

No. 3 14

Pastorale

True to its nickname, this study should evoke the shepherd’s lilting pan-flute (replete with playful grace note figures), and the tranquility of the rolling countryside. The meter is crucial to conveying this peaceful mood: the tempo marking *andantino* must be felt at the level of the dotted quarter note, so it is important to keep the eighth note motion flowing. The LH must give a slight emphasis on beat 1 and an even subtler stress on beat 4, keeping all other beats light with a buoyant wrist touch.

a release. Exploit micro-timing effects—a slight hesitation at the end of m. 19, for instance—to highlight moments where the harmony modulates. At other times, let the pulse flow simply and allow this serene music to unfold.

No. 23 58

Retour (*Returning*)

Remember to keep repeated notes soft and aim the finger attack within the upper part of the key depth, to avoid tiring and becoming tense. Even in **f** (such as at m. 17), play the RH slightly under the indicated dynamic and let the LH—whose single-note patterns are much easier to project and shape—do more of the work.

Treat each group of three repeated notes or chords as one unit. The first note of the unit gets an impulse from the wrist: try this first by lifting the hand slowly while the forearm remains stable, as if a string were tied to the back of the large knuckles (the angle of the wrist should increase until nearly 90 degrees). Then, swat the hand downward until the back of the hand returns to being aligned with the forearm. This motion will create the impulse. The second and third notes of each unit are merely ricochet, as the firm fingertips bounce slightly and produce the sound using only residual energy from the first note.

Practice each note individually of the four-voice texture at m. 9 to ensure each finger is balanced and supported by the wrist and arm.

No. 24 60

L' hirondelle (*The Swallow*)

Before attempting any part of this study hands together, aim to satisfy two conditions: 1) RH should be able to block its three-note groups and shift positions without looking; and 2) LH should be able to play its alternating bass

and melody notes slightly faster than performance tempo, and without playing too *staccato*.

It will be necessary for your eyes to follow the jumps of the LH, which will require the RH to be as independent as possible and to feel its way around the keyboard. If the LH releases each note too quickly, it risks making an abrupt motion in which muscles engage in the forearm. This muscle tension will ultimately impede the sweep of the arm back and forth across the keyboard. Making the LH *staccatos* a bit more cushioned will promote a smooth, released hand and arm.

The repeated G's in m. 29, played first by the LH and then immediately by the RH in the descending *arpeggios*, must be approached with poise; observing the *poco rit.* will be advantageous in allowing these notes to speak.

No. 25 62

La chevaleresque (*The Knight Errant*)

Keep the fingers close to the keys and prepare all new hand positions—such as the jumping chords in m. 1—as early as possible to control a light touch and subtle dynamic hairpins; this “Knight Errant” starts his ride in the distance after all! Preserve the crisp dotted rhythms that are so pervasive, never allowing them to slip into sounding like triplets.

A **f** dynamic arrives only at the first obstacle our knight faces, in m. 9: imagine two characters arguing, as one attempts to persuade by force while the other attempts to charm in reply.

The slower harmonic motion (one chord every two measures) and sustained bass layer from m. 17 suggests this section may be felt in a pulse of two beats per bar, or even one. Let the long lines of triplets unspool gracefully, without adding any exaggerated dynamic swells.

In mm. 33–34 and 37–38, use a downward wrist motion for all LH notes and lift the RH upward in response in order to clarify the rhythm. Highlight the chromatic line played by the RH thumb while de-emphasizing the static 5th finger repeated G. Be sure to *crescendo* all the way down the scales in mm. 42–43; making a *crescendo* going up the keyboard is often more intuitive, so pay extra attention to dynamics as the music hurtles toward its triumphant close.

25 PROGRESSIVE STUDIES

No. 1

Johann Friedrich Burgmüller
Op. 100

Allegro moderato ($\text{♩} = 138\text{--}152$)

Sheet music for piano. The top staff is in treble clef, common time, with a dynamic of *p dolce*. The bottom staff is in bass clef, common time. The bass line consists of sustained notes with the number 8 below them. The treble line features a melodic line with fingerings: 5, 3, 5, 1, 5, 1 2 1, 5, 1 2 1. The page number 135 is at the bottom left.

No. 2

Johann Friedrich Burgmüller
Op. 100

Allegro scherzando ($\text{♩} = 138\text{--}152$)

No. 24

Johann Friedrich Burgmüller
Op. 100

Allegro non troppo ($\bullet = 116-126$)

No. 25

Johann Friedrich Burgmüller
Op. 100

Allegro marziale ($\text{♩} = 132\text{--}144$)

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13