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Message from the President

[Mona DeCesare](#), NCTM • monawudecesare@gmail.com

CAPMT President



Dear CAPMT Members,

It is an honor and privilege to serve as your CAPMT President for the 2021–2023 term.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Wendi Kirby for her leadership of CAPMT during the past two years. I am also very appreciative of all of the work done by our event chairs, as well as everything our district directors and chapter presidents contribute to our organization. Thank you to everyone who has dedicated their time and energy to our CAPMT students, events, offerings, and programs. I am looking forward to working with our new and

continuing board members, event chairs, district directors, and chapter presidents over the next two years. Thank you to everyone for your willingness to serve.

I am excited for the upcoming CAPMT 2021 state conference. This event will be a hybrid conference and will take place on Friday, October 15 and Saturday, October 16, 2021; it will be offered both in-person at California State University, Fresno as well as online on Zoom. The theme for the conference is “Recovery and Renewal: Music Moving Forward” and will feature guest artists Ran Dank and Soyeon Kate Lee in a joint piano recital. Our conference will also offer a masterclass by our guest artists, performances by our competition winners and YPLN members, the the world premiere performance of our 2021 commissioned composer, Amy Stephens’s new work, *Metamorphosis 2021*, as well as a poster session and presentations on a diverse array of topics. There will be no overlapping sessions at this year’s conference so that attendees can enjoy each and every session! Please check out the full conference schedule [here](#). Thank you to everyone who will be traveling to Fresno for the conference and for those attending online; I hope it will bring you all inspiration, ideas, and connections. A special word of thanks to our VP for Conferences, Dr. Michael Kirkorian and to our wonderful conference committee: Dr. Eloise Kim, Wendi Kirby, Dr. Mitzi Kolar, Dr. Stephen Pierce and Noreen Wenjen, for all of their hard work putting this exciting event together.

I am also delighted to announce that we are planning to offer all of our student programs, both competitive and non-competitive, in-person this year, careful to follow state safety protocol guidelines. However, we are monitoring the environment carefully and are ready to move these programs online, if necessary.

In addition, I am thrilled to report that our website has been updated: the Student Program section, including our [Competition page](#) is now more concise and easier to navigate. The registration process for events will also hopefully be easier and less confusing as a result, and possible with a simple click of a button. For easy access, we have also added a 'search' bar. Thank you to Grant Kondo, Dr. Julie Ann Ballard, Su-Shing Chiu, Kary Kramer, Noreen Wenjen, Mage Lockwood, and Dr. Mitzi Kolar for all their help in this endeavor. Your willingness to help is greatly appreciated!

We are proud of our many wonderful CAPMT members and I want to acknowledge a few specific individuals for their achievements:

- Prof. Antoinette Perry is our 2021 CAPMT Lifetime Achievement Award recipient and will be honored at the conference.
- Amy Stephens is our 2021 CAPMT Commissioned Composer. Her work, *Metamorphosis 2021*, for piano and tenor saxophone will be premiered at the conference.
- Dr. Eloise Kim is the recipient for CAPMT Connect Article of the Year award for her article "7 Guidelines for Teaching Students with Autism in a Private Studio." See [CAPMT Connect: Spring 2021, Vol. 6 No. 1](#).
- Our CAPMT 2021 Outstanding Members are as follows:
 - District 1: San Diego North Chapter – Elena Yarritu
San Diego South Chapter – Timothy Broadway
 - District 2: Santa Clara Valley Chapter – Yvonne Reddy and Glenda Timmerman
 - District 3: South Bay/Santa Monica Bay Chapter – Danielle Yi
 - District 4: Music Teachers of the Desert Chapter – Alex Danson
Riverside-San Bernardino Counties Chapter – Diane Norcott
 - District 5: Sacramento Chapter – Soojung Guanikim
 - District 6: Central Coast Music Teachers Association Chapter – Linda Brady
 - District 7: Redwood Empire Chapter – Elizabeth McDougall
 - District 8: Orange County Chapter – Heidi Lee Kim
 - District 9: Greater Pasadena Chapter – Vera Hoalim
San Fernando Valley Chapter – Nobuyo Nishizaka
Santa Clarita Valley-Ventura Chapter – Lyle Michaud

A huge congratulations also goes out to District 3: South Bay/Santa Monica Bay for being selected as the 2021 CAPMT Chapter of the Year. CONGRATULATIONS to all!

I wish you all a very successful teaching year and look forward to seeing you at the conference. Stay healthy, strong, and safe!

Mona Wu DeCesare, NCTM
President, CAPMT

Editorial

[Dr. Stephen Pierce](#) • pierces@usc.edu

CAPMT Connect Editor



Hello fellow CAPMT members,

This past summer, one of the things my Interlochen Arts Camp colleagues and I noticed at the very start of camp was that all of the pianists played exceedingly quietly and timidly at first. It took us all about a week or two to get each of our students there to open up artistically, perform with a full and projected sound, and make their musical intentions clear to the listener in the recital hall. Similarly, one of our camp conductors commented to me that it took a full week of daily rehearsals before the students started to (re-)develop the needed listening skills to begin playing together as a cohesive ensemble. These examples demonstrate some of the tolls living and working online for months have taken on our students (and ourselves). The lack of opportunities for all of us to teach and play music live and in person has had far-reaching impacts that will likely take some time to remedy. Let me add however that I

am eternally grateful for technology such as Zoom, FaceTime, Teams, Skype and more as this technology enabled so many of us to continue working online over the past year-and-a-half. That said, it has been an absolute joy and delight to return to teaching and playing music in person and I do not particularly miss Zoom lessons or YouTube recitals. For the moment, I am relishing every moment of my (in-person) teaching and trying my best not to take anything for granted!

One of my USC students, who is supremely shy and introverted was positively beaming after his first lesson back in person after studying piano online for over a year. He commented to me as follows: “Wow, Dr. P....I had forgotten just how fun it is to work together in person.” Yes, indeed! In her latest IMTF column, Heidi Saario speaks to our current moment, and addresses the transition many of us are now making back to in-person instruction having taught online for so many months. As always, she provides thoughtful and practical suggestions for us to apply in our teaching.

Also included in this issue is an valuable article by pianist Evelyn Lee focused on selected piano works by underrepresented North American composers. In this article, Evelyn writes about how the music of African-American composers William Grant Still (1895–1978), and Florence Price (1899–

1952), as well as that of the Chinese-Canadian Composer Alexina Louie (b. 1949) mirrors each of their life experiences, their spirituality, as well as death in specific piano pieces. In another inspiring wellness column, Dr. Jackie Petitto focuses on the language of yoga and how we might effectively use ideas from yoga to benefit our teaching. Gail Lew's column is again packed to the brim full of new music recommendations for piano, while our coda column features some repertoire ideas you might consider to help inspire your students in general, and perhaps utilize with the student who has hit a slump or learning plateau in particular. Thank you to Carrie Campbell, Alison Edwards, and Crystal Rivette for their thoughtful and noteworthy repertoire suggestions.

I am excited to announce that starting next spring, we will be including a new column in Connect called, "Ask the Editors." The idea behind this column is to provide you, our CAPMT teachers with a forum to submit your teaching related questions to the editorial committee, and to have one or more of us respond to you with our best answers and recommendations. Questions can include anything from repertoire suggestions to teaching tips related to various music skills etc. Should we not have a great suggestion or know the answer to a specific question, we will reach out to expert colleagues for additional help. Questions and answers that are selected for publication can either include the name of

the teacher who submitted the question in print, or be published in the journal anonymously: it is entirely up to you! If you are keen to submit a question, please email me at pierces@usc.edu.

I am so looking forward to our state conference this weekend. While I will not be able to attend this event in person, I am still looking forward to a fun and informative two days of learning and interaction from the comfort of my home. It was a pleasure and privilege to serve on the conference planning committee together with such a dedicated and terrific group of people. Thank you everyone! Hats off in particular to Dr. Michael Krikorian for all of his time and hard work planning this event, and commitment to making it a success. I am particularly proud of Michael as he is a USC alum and one of my (most outstanding) former TAs! I also wish all of our CAPMT members a wonderful state conference whether you plan to attend in person or online.

And now, I hope that you will enjoy this issue of Connect. May you also have a tremendously successful fall and winter of teaching and learning, and continue to keep safe and healthy. Let us all try to enjoy every second of our time with our students whether teaching in person or online!

– Editor

Independent Music Teachers Forum (IMTF)

From Survival to Revival

Heidi Saario

Now that the new teaching year is well under way, it probably looks a little different from last year since many of us are slowly returning back to in-person lessons. In the same way that we were forced to suddenly adapt to online teaching back in spring 2020, I have found myself needing some time to get re-adjusted back to in-person lessons. In addition to the obvious safety procedures we all have to keep in mind when teaching in person, I have found myself rethinking many practical things around the studio after being required to sit in front of a screen for such a long time. I am sure that many of you can relate to feeling quite exhausted by the end of the 2020–21 school year. In trying to reinvent our teaching to fit the online format and best serve our students the creative juices eventually seemed to run out for many of us. Now that we are able to return to in-person teaching, it gives us a great opportunity to reflect back on our work and think about how to move forward from survival to revival mode. Interestingly, there are some teachers who actually enjoyed the online format so much that they have now moved their entire teaching practice online permanently. While I commend these teachers, this column is more focused on returning back to in-person teaching and not on teaching online.

I have done a lot of reflecting over the past few weeks on this topic: both on making lesson plans and setting goals for each individual student, and also thinking about the studio as a whole. I have looked back at the period of time I spent teaching online to try to figure out what things worked well in my teaching and which did not. As such, I wanted to determine what I want to continue doing and what I want to stop doing in my teaching practice.

As we can surely all attest, online teaching is not all bad and certainly provides some positive attributes too. One of the benefits of online lessons is that it encourages students to be more independent. For example, they have to make notes in their music on their own. They also have to figure out how to start playing from a specific measure without us pointing in the score for them. My students also had to do more counting and singing aloud by themselves since I was unable to join in. Teaching online during the pandemic also forced me to think of alternatives for handwritten lesson notes and in the end I started using an app to record them. This has proven to be a success for my students, their parents, and me. Even though I am teaching my students back in person, I have continued to use this app and type lesson notes digitally at each lesson. Some of you might relate to the urge we feel as teachers to interrupt a student's playing to correct something right away. During online lessons I had to hold off my comments until the student stopped playing in order for them to be able to hear what I was saying. I am trying to stay mindful about this fact now that I

am back in the same room with my students. Some of my students also got used to making recordings of their playing between lessons over the past months and I still welcome these recordings from them. I hope to continue implementing these activities from online lessons into my in-person teaching because each provides a benefit and enhances learning outcomes in my students.

However, after reflecting on my online teaching, I have also come up with a list of activities that are not possible in an online format and which I really want to do more of now that my students and I are all able to gather together in the same space again. These activities include:

- Off-the-bench activities
- Music games
- Rhythm activities
- Singing together
- Improvising together
- Playing duets with students
- Students playing duets together

As teachers we tailor our teaching to meet the level of each individual student while trying to support the specific needs of everyone with specialized learning opportunities during lessons. However, I have noticed that certain issues that were harder to address during online lessons now need even more focused attention. In order to address these issues and also avoid feeling overwhelmed as a teacher, I would suggest picking one area of learning to focus on with each student over the next few months. Below are several examples of skills that I am planning to focus on in my studio over the coming weeks and months. Personally I found working on each of these skills to be particularly challenging during the past year and they all now deserve some time and attention.

- Working on my students' ability to match pitch accurately
- Improving students' sense of feeling a steady pulse. I plan to work on this through improvising together with my students
- Working on helping my students achieve a better hand position in which individual joints within the hand do not collapse
- Working on helping my students find a more relaxed approach to playing without extra tension in the arms, hands, and shoulders
- Implementing more hands-on work on complex rhythm patterns together with my students

At the studio level, I have also thought about areas for improvement. I am choosing a skill area or theme to focus on for a month or two at a time: focusing on ear training, or sight

reading, or rhythm, for example. I would encourage you to reflect on our current teaching and activities at a studio-wide level first and then zoom into more detail at an individual level. Is there perhaps one thing that you could pick as a focus at the studio level as well as one thing to focus on at an individual level with each student? Thereafter plan activities to support these skills. To start this process, you might try asking yourself: "How do I want to feel at the end of the teaching year when I look back on my teaching practice?"

I hope you are all feeling as excited as I am about returning to in-person lessons. As challenging as our teaching has been during the pandemic, I would like to think that we have all gained something from the experience of teaching online as well. Furthermore, if we continue to have a set up ready for online lessons, it gives us the flexibility to offer a hybrid approach when needed. It also allows us to connect to our community of music teachers, students, and music lovers around the world in new ways that can benefit us all for a long time. Happy teaching both in person and online!



[Heidi Saario](#) maintains a private studio in Alameda, California and is the CAPMT State Chair of the Independent Music Teacher's Forum (IMTF). In addition to teaching, she remains active as a performer. In recent years her solo and collaborative performances have taken her to many cities across Canada and the United States. As a native of Finland, she enjoys programming and promoting Scandinavian composers. Her debut CD, "Jean Sibelius - Compositions for Piano" was released in 2008. Her collaboration with soprano Cindy Koistinen as Duo Freya produced another recording, "Diamonds of the North – Songs from Scandinavia" in 2010. Heidi is a Senior Examiner within the College of Examiners for the Royal Conservatory of

Music (RCM) and holds a Master of Music degree in piano performance and pedagogy from the RCM.

Mirrored in Music: Experiences of Life, Death, and Spirituality as Embodied in Selected Piano Pieces by Underrepresented North American Composers of the Twentieth Century

Evelyn Lee

Throughout different eras, composers have explored the concepts of life and death in their music. Works such as the Gregorian chant, “Media vita in morte sumus” (*In the midst of life we are in death*), a religious text and a popular Latin phrase used in song and literature during the Baroque period, and Johann Sebastian Bach’s “Komm, süßer Tod” (*Come, Sweet Death*), a piece alluding to a yearning for death and a peaceful pathway to heaven, are shaped not only by the musical trends of their respective eras, but also by the historical, cultural, and social experiences of each composer. This includes the influence of each composer’s religion or spirituality on their music. As a result, the music of these composers mirrors the psychological and spiritual conditions of their particular life experiences. This point is especially pertinent to the music of certain composers over the past century who suffered struggles resulting from their experiences of racial discrimination as well as cultural assimilation in America. Three twentieth-century piano pieces by underrepresented North American composers that explore the concepts of life and death, and also reflect aspects of the composer’s religion or spirituality are *I leap through the sky with stars* by Alexina Louie, *Three Visions* by William Grant Still, and *Fantasie Negre* No. 1 in E Minor by Florence Price. In this article, I will take a closer look at these symbolic works. I will examine certain life experiences of these composers and aim to show how each composer has mirrored specific aspects of their life experiences in their works. In so doing, I will also illustrate how the concepts of life, death, and spirituality are musically represented in their compositions.

In direct response to the deaths of Glenn Gould (1945–1982) and Claude Vivier (1948–1983), Alexina Louie (b. 1949) portrays the concept of death and celebrates the eternal state of art in the piano piece, *I leap through the sky with stars*.¹ A Chinese-Canadian composer from Vancouver, Louie explored Eastern music, poetry, and philosophy as a graduate student at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD).² She commuted between San Diego and Los Angeles to specifically learn the ch’in (also spelled as ‘guqin’), a traditional Chinese stringed

¹ Alexina Louie, “Introduction” in *I Leap through the Sky with Stars*, (Toronto: Gordon V. Thompson, 1994).

² Esther Yu-Hui Chu, “On the Musical Silk Route: Piano Music of Alexina Louie,” (Doctor of Music Thesis, University of Alberta, 1997), 11, <https://era.library.ualberta.ca/items/4708f440-e4cd-46ea-9ec7-14412d316e12/view/028d39f5-259d-4bfb-8344-afbe1b9a9d02/NQ21667.pdf>.

instrument that she has often featured in her music to serve as a bridge between her mixed Eastern and Western background.³

Chinese philosophy relies heavily on the teachings of Confucius, a philosopher and politician from 500 BC China. He was known to have played the ch'in not only for entertainment but also for moral elevation.⁴ Playing this instrument served as a form of meditation to restore spirituality, and was believed to create "an intimate discourse between God and Man."⁵ As such, the ch'in player aligned with the Confucian philosophy of "bettering oneself as a person [...] of the family and, in turn, to the betterment of society, the state, and the world" by playing the instrument.⁶ Louie has been inspired by these Eastern philosophies of meditation and elevating one's spirituality, and has used the ch'in as a vehicle to further explore "the philosophical attitude associated with performing on this instrument."⁷

This piece is accompanied by a Zen poem by Dōgen (1200–1253), a Japanese Buddhist and philosopher:

"Four and fifty years
I've hung the sky with stars.
Now I leap through –
What shattering!"⁸

Louie also studied and has featured the yin-and-yang philosophy in her music.⁹ The yin-and-yang philosophy is an idea where opposites complement one another to create harmony.¹⁰ This philosophy aligns with Louie's compositional style of combining Eastern elements together with her Western musical training. In so doing, she creates unity in her music and ultimately, forges her own personal identity as a Chinese-Canadian composer. One example of the yin-and-yang element in this work is apparent in the constant juxtaposition of contrasting registers of the piano: music played in the upper alternating with music in the lower register. The opening of the piece is shown in example one. Here, Louie creates a shimmering effect in the piano's upper register. The use of the upper register here contributes to an ethereal and distant quality in the overall sound, and highlights the crystalline sounds in the upper extreme of the piano.¹¹

³ Yoomi J. Kim, "The Evolution of Alexina Louie's Piano Music: Reflections of a Soul Searching Journey," (DMA Document, University of Cincinnati, 2009), 20.

⁴ Chu, 15.

⁵ Ibid, 16.

⁶ Ann L Silverberg, "The Qin: China's Most Revered Musical Instrument," *Education about Asia* (2013): 24, <https://www.asianstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/the-qin-chinas-most-revered-musical-instrument.pdf> (accessed October 12, 2021).

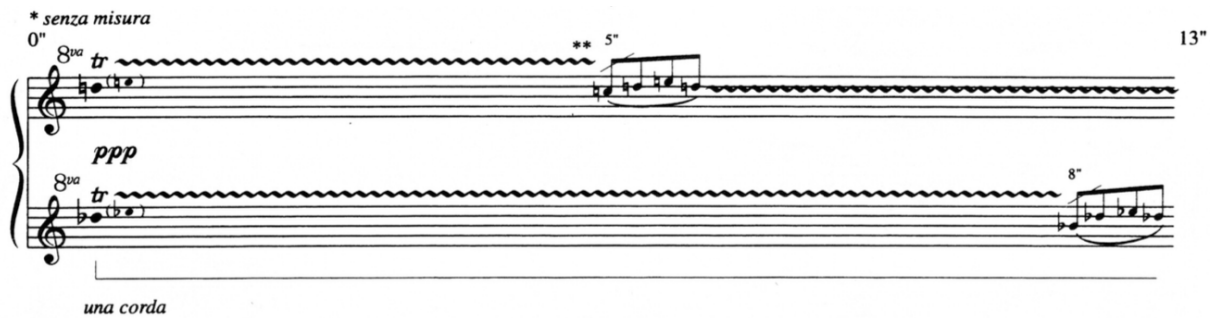
⁷ Chu, 15.

⁸ Louie, "Introduction."

⁹ Kim, 33.

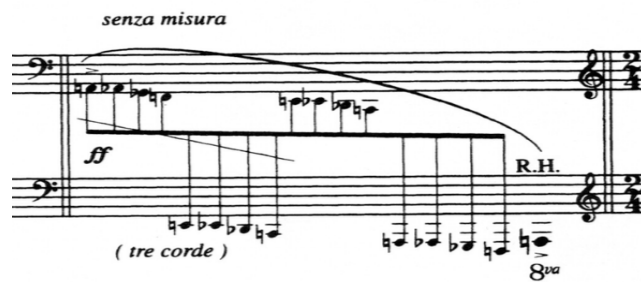
¹⁰ Mark Cartwright, "Yin and Yang" in *World History Encyclopedia*, https://www.worldhistory.org/Yin_and_Yang/ (accessed October 8, 2021).

¹¹ Kim, 33.



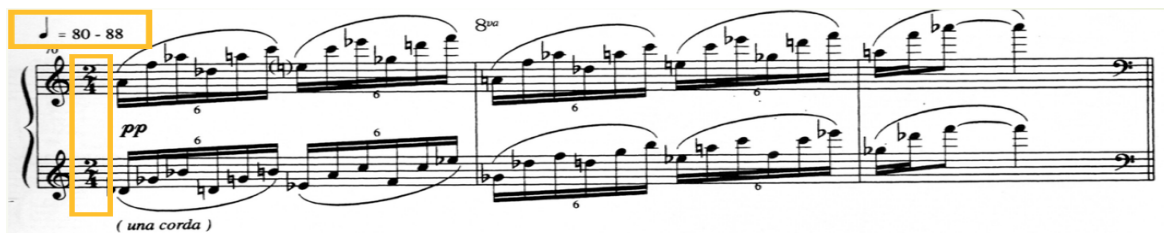
Ex. 1: Upper Register Shimmers, m. 1.

In example two, a violent lower register passage demonstrates the power and range of the piano's lower strings. The use of the lower register of the piano not only represents the opposite register of the instrument, it can also be seen as embodying the opposing or complementing extreme of a full range of sound. John Kimura Parker comments that these passages in the lower register require "power to attain a correspondingly violent *fortissimo*."¹² These striking musical contrasts highlight the coexistence of two extremes. As such, they represent the yin-and-yang, which are ultimately metaphors for the complementary concepts of life and death.



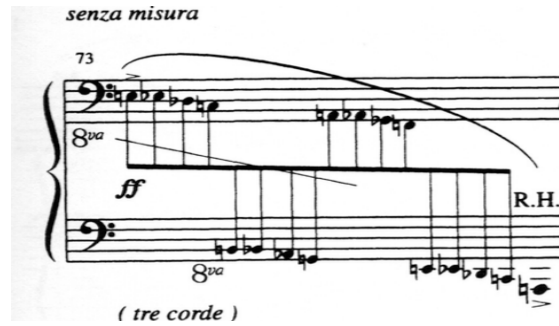
Ex. 2: Powerful Lower Register, m. 69.

Louie also uses contrasts between strict, metered time and unmetered sections in order to depict the juxtaposition of the two mediums of life versus death. Consistent with the yin-and-yang concept, example three presents music written in a 2/4 meter with a set tempo of a quarter note equals 80 to 88, versus the fourth example which is labeled "senza misura" (without measure) and shows a descending flourish of notes. The use of changing meters is striking because the flow of the music alternates between compactness and spaciousness, thus blurring the lines between the two sets of contrasting material.



Ex. 3: Strict, metered time, mm. 70-72.

¹² Ibid, 35.



Ex. 4: Unmetered flourishes, m. 73.

Louie also creates contrast in this work in her use of the pedals. In the unmetered sections she alternates between *tre corde* and *una corda*. *Tre corde*, meaning “three strings,” or the release of the left-most pedal, and *una corda*, meaning “one (fewer) string” or the use of the left-most pedal, appear phrase after phrase (see example 5). Whereas the *tre corde* aligns with the rich resonance of the *ch’in*, the *una corda* mimics the *ch’in*’s ability to create a delicate sound.¹³ Metaphorically, this juxtaposition links back to the teachings of Confucius, who states that the instrument bridges an alliance between humans and the higher being.¹⁴

Ex. 5: *Tre corde* vs. *Una corda*, m. 76.

In short, the musical details discussed above in this work, are used together in such a way as to tie back to the coexistence of humankind and the spiritual realm. Together they form a yin-and-yang relationship thus creating harmony and balance. Furthermore, Louie demonstrates the merging of two cultural styles in her music thereby establishing her unique identity as a Chinese-Canadian composer in the twentieth century. Incorporating elements of her Western background, and training as a composer living in Canada and the United States while also exploring her Eastern, Chinese roots, she does not conform to a single conventional compositional style but rather extends into a new category of her own. This arguably echoes the evolutions evident in modern society, where cultures no longer remain separated but rather blend together to create new perspectives and insights for a variety of people and their roots.

¹³ Chu, 12.

¹⁴ Ibid, 16.

William Grant Still (1895–1978) was an African-American composer from Little Rock, Arkansas. His piece, *Three Visions* is a three-movement work in which the soul's journey after death is portrayed.¹⁵ The piece embodies elements of Western European Modernism together with components of the African American musical idioms of the African American Spiritual, Jazz, and Blues. Throughout the work, Still conjures strikingly contrasting moods, which also indicate the dual influences of Western European and African American music on him as a composer. Like Louie, Still also incorporated a juxtaposition of two extremes in order to acknowledge the existence of opposites. This runs parallel to his unique identity as a composer whose music exemplifies both Western European compositional ideals as well as the influence of African American music.

The first movement of *Three Visions*, "Dark Horsemen," represents the day of the judgment for the soul.¹⁶ The music expresses a sense of turbulence and horror, with violent shrieks and hooves created by the horses.¹⁷ The shrieks can be heard within the very opening of the piece, where a descending two-note gesture in the right hand mimics the sound of the shrieks (see example 6).¹⁸



Ex. 6: Horse shrieks, mm. 1-2.

Horse hooves are then represented in the triplet pattern, which create a clippety-clop sound (see example 7).¹⁹



Ex. 7: Horse hooves, m. 3.

¹⁵ Judith Anne Still, liner notes to *William Grant Still: Piano Music*, Mark Bozzer, Piano, Naxos Classical 8.559210, CD, 2004, https://www.naxos.com/mainsite/blurbs_reviews.asp?item_code=8.559210&catNum=559210&filetype=About+this+Recording&language=English (accessed October 12, 2021).

¹⁶ Judith Anne Still, liner notes to *William Grant Still: Piano Music*.

¹⁷ Catherine Parsons Smith, *William Grant Still: A Study in Contradictions* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 329.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

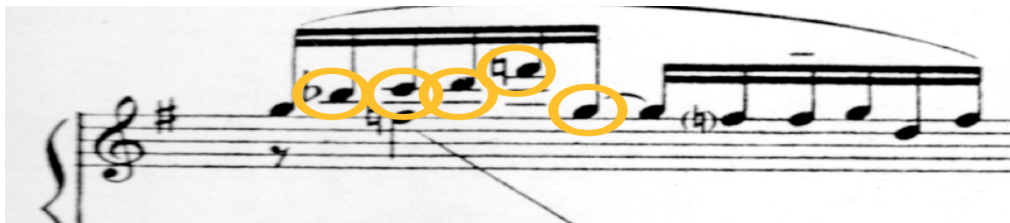
The restless, ongoing momentum comes to a stop at the end of the movement.

The second movement, "Summerland" follows and reveals a completely different atmosphere. The title of this movement refers to the afterlife and its peacefulness after the storm of life. There is a serene, calm quality to the music, which is harmonized with dissonances throughout the movement. The movement begins with a serene and lyrical melody set in a smooth and sustained manner. Unlike the urgent and driven character of the first movement, which is written in 4/4, the second movement unfolds in a dream-like, relaxed 6/8 meter (see example 8).



Ex. 8: Serene and lyrical melodies, mm. 1-5.

Still specifically explored the pentatonic scale in "Summerland." The pentatonic scale is a key element in African American spirituals.²⁰ According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the pentatonic scale is a five-note pattern rather than a more Western seven note or heptatonic major or minor scale.²¹ Still uses the major pentatonic scale, a type of Anhemitonic pentatonic scale, the form of which comprises a series of notes that derive from a conventional major scale. An example of a major pentatonic scale that Still used in this movement is one based on B flat (see example 9).



Ex. 9: Major pentatonic scale based on B flat: B flat-C-D-F-G, m. 48.

While the pentatonic scale is not exclusive to the African American idiom since it is used in other cultures as well, it is one of the defining scales and "specific features of Afro-American music that characterize the melodies of this movement."²² Still used this striking scale to bridge

²⁰ Ibid, 49.

²¹ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "Pentatonic Scale," accessed October 12, 2021, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pentatonic%20scale>.

²² Smith, 136.

the transition back into the “recapitulation” and in this particular excerpt, he descends down to G rather than going up to G to create the complete B flat major pentatonic scale. In this way, the wide leap adds a further layer of expressiveness while still outlining the B flat major pentatonic scale. By adding further emphasis to this beautiful scale, Still most likely intended to bring the African American musical idiom into the mainstream, and fulfill his goal in “[creating] both an African American art music and an American art music...[by drawing] from black vernacular musical traditions for his art music compositions.”²³ Not only does “Summerland” include the pentatonic scale, it also includes descending melodic curves (a common feature in spirituals),²⁴ as well as the ‘blues scales’ of the Blues.²⁵

The juxtaposition of the dramatically contrasting first and second movements of *Three Visions* most likely emphasizes the two distinct moods of the soul’s journey, with the first movement representing the turbulent judgement day, while the second movement arrives at a place of serenity and peace. The duality of extremes is also represented in Still’s compositional style in this work since it includes characteristics of both the African American, and Western European styles of music which he had been exposed to early on in his life.

Still was born into a middle-class household and grew up with his mother, a school teacher and a college graduate of Atlanta University²⁶ who also taught as a faculty member and wrote plays.²⁷ His grandmother sang spirituals and hymns around the house, and her particular favorite was, *Little David, Play on Yo’ Harp*.²⁸ In addition, his stepfather, who enjoyed operatic music, accompanied the young William to concerts and spent much of his salary supplying his stepson with Red Seal records.²⁹ The two of them sang together and often discussed the music they listened to, as well as any plays and stage shows they had watched together, such as *Ben Hur*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Robin Hood*.³⁰ His grandmother also told him stories of slavery and sang spirituals around the house, and most likely influenced Still into bringing elements from the African American Spiritual into his compositional writing.³¹

During Still’s life, American society at large had considered Jazz, Blues, and African American music as lowly and even immoral, with some even “associating.... [these types of music] with

²³ Ibid, 48.

²⁴ Ibid, 52.

²⁵ Ibid, 49.

²⁶ Jon Michael Spencer, *Black Sacred Music* 6, no. 2 (1992): 1–77, <https://doi.org/10.1215/10439455-6.2.1>.

²⁷ Smith, 307.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ “William Grant Still (1895-1978): Biographical Notes,” *William Grant Still Music & The Master-Player Library*, accessed October 12, 2021, <http://www.williamgrantstillmusic.com/BiographicalNotes.htm>.

³⁰ Smith, 307.

³¹ Ibid, 34.

nightclubs and brothels.”³² Still worked to redefine the position of African American vernacular music, incorporating both elements of African American music together with elements of Western European Modernism into his works. The latter includes the use of tone-clusters, and complex cross-rhythms, as well as using the piano in a percussive way. He further focused on defining African American culture using an ultramodern idiom – this included using pentatonic scales as used in African-American spirituals, blue scales, and harmonic juxtaposition of tonic, subdominant, and dominant harmonies also present in spirituals.³³ These elements create a style and musical idiom that was uniquely his own and which was, “opposed to a form that merely imitate[s] the innovations of [his] white modernist counterpart[s],” and avoided replicating a solely Western style of composition in his writing.³⁴

Still also used another form of juxtaposition in the harmonic language of his music. By juxtaposing contrasting chords, he creates striking contrasts thereby highlighting tension within the music. For example, towards the end of the middle section of “Summerland,” Still writes a G major seventh chord and a G minor seventh chord, side-by-side (see example 10). The tension between the major and minor chords here may possibly represent the irony of African Americans living in America, but with no freedom in the land of liberty.



Ex. 10: G Major and G Minor seventh chords juxtaposed in “Summerland,” mm. 43-44.

The *Afro-American Symphony* is another monumental work by Still which combined musical idioms of African American with those of Western music. This symphony has been described as “rich, emotional, and at the same time spiritually satisfying.”³⁵ *Three Visions* achieves a similar response by evoking rich sonorities through extended chords that are dramatically altered within various chord progressions. The striking quality of these extended harmonies in *Three Visions* most likely implies the struggle of fear and discrimination that African Americans faced in the United States during Still’s lifetime, and which continues to this day. Still directly

³² Ibid, 54.

³³ Ibid, 49.

³⁴ Alexander Weheliye, “In the Mix: Hearing the Souls of Black Folk,” *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 45, no. 4 (2000): 539.

³⁵ Verna Arvey, *In One Lifetime: A Biography of William Grant Still* (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 1984), 99.

addressed this fear and discrimination in his writings,³⁶ but arguably also suggested these more indirectly in his musical compositions.

Florence Price (1899–1952) was an African American composer who also explored the universal human concepts of life, death, and spirituality in her music, particularly through her works that quote African American spirituals. She is notably the first African American woman to have had a work performed by a major orchestra in her lifetime.³⁷ It is also interesting to note that like William Grant Still, she too hailed from Little Rock, Arkansas.³⁸

To create her *Fantasie Negre* No. 1 in E Minor, Price included and arranged a pre-existing African American spiritual. She further incorporated compositional devices that are characteristic of both Western European and African American styles of music into her compositional output. Deeply religious, Price is probably best-known for her many spiritual arrangements such as *Ten Spirituals*, *Go Down, Moses*, and *Deep River*. She also explored a variety of spiritual melodies in her compositions. This was most likely done to connect to her faith and Christian values, and also to highlight the history of slavery in America. For example, her rendition of *I Am Bound for the Kingdom*, shows the narrative of a slave poet “looking forward to the escape of the soul...[and] escape of the physical self in this life through the surreptitious Underground Railroad.”³⁹

Written in the year of 1929, *Fantasie Negre* No. 1 includes an arrangement of the spiritual “Sinner, Please Don’t Let This Harvest Pass.” The text of this spiritual is as follows:

“Sinner, please don't let this harvest pass;
Sinner, please don't let this harvest pass;
Sinner, please don't let this harvest pass,
and die and lose your soul at last.

I know that my Redeemer lives,
I know that my Redeemer lives,
I know that my Redeemer lives,
Sinner, please don't let this harvest pass.

³⁶ Smith, 35.

³⁷ Nicholas Slonimsky, “Price, Florence” in *The Concise Edition of Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, Eighth Edition (New York: Schirmer, 1994), 791.

³⁸ Rae Linda Brown, *The Heart of a Woman: The Life and Music of Florence B. Price*, Edited by Guthrie P. Ramsey Jr. (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2020), 34.

³⁹ Ibid, 94.

Sinner, O see the cruel tree,
 Sinner, O see the cruel tree,
 Sinner, O see the cruel tree,
 Where Christ died for you and me.

My God is a mighty man of war,
 My God is a mighty man of war,
 My God is a mighty man of war,
 Sinner, please don't let this harvest pass."⁴⁰

In this piano piece, Price uses a traditional Western European ternary formal structure (ABA') and adds an introduction and coda. Price's compositional training was Western European in nature (she studied at the New England Conservatory)⁴¹ and so this form type would have been well-known to her. However, the introduction is quite free and improvisatory in style (see example 11).



Ex. 11: Improvisatory-like introduction, mm. 1-2.

As such, it embodies characteristics of the Afro-American style of Jazz and the tradition of improvisation. While the passagework within this introduction is not taken from the spiritual referenced in this work, it serves as an effective prequel to the hymn material that follows. The freedom of time in this passage also arguably correlates to the African American people's desire to freely express themselves through words and music at a time when they still suffered racial segregation. Moreover, this tradition of improvisation is one of many creative practices that came about as a result of African Americans no longer having anything of their own, where "Africans were stripped down to the bare minimums of their culture."⁴²

⁴⁰ Anonymous, "Sinner, please don't let this harvest pass" (No. 774) in *Lead Me, Guide Me Hymnal*, Second Edition (Chicago: GIA, 2012).

⁴¹ Brown, 40.

⁴² Luqman Muhammad Abdullah, "The Sounds of Liberation: Resistance, Cultural Retention, and Progressive Traditions for Social Justice in African American Music" (Master's Thesis, Cornell University 2009), 58.

After the introduction, the piece moves into the A section where the spiritual *Sinner, Please Don't Let This Harvest Pass* appears for the first time (see example 12).



Ex. 12: A section, spiritual introduced. A set of variations, mm. 17-23.

Within the A section, Price presents four different variations of the spiritual. The B section includes new material in contrast to the spiritual. There is a songful, dream-like quality to this section that differs strikingly from the previous section (see example 13).



Ex. 13: B section, contrasting new material, mm. 119-122.

The music then transitions to A prime. In this section, Price provides an even more elaborate and virtuosic set of variations of the spiritual theme compared to the opening A section (see example 14).



Ex. 14: A', more elaborate set of variations than A, mm. 141-146.

From this elaborate set of variations, the music moves to the coda, marked *presto*. Here, Price uses fragments of the spiritual. In this way she effectively creates a sense of disarray and heightens the emotional intensity of the music. The stormy finale ends tragically on an E minor chord, which is the same chord used for the opening musical gesture at the beginning of the piece.



Ex. 15: Coda, mm. 277-282.

In this piece, Price also uses the interval of a flatted seventh as a reference to the African American Spiritual.⁴³ As someone who was deeply religious and arranged spirituals throughout her life, Price was mirroring her faith in her music as she utilized this dissonant interval throughout the piece.⁴⁴ The recurring flatted seventh interval here adds another intricate layer of color to the writing. An example of this interval is shown in example 16.



Ex. 16: Seventh Interval in the half cadence, mm. 13-16.

The A prime section, which I have noted is a more elaborate set of variations compared to the A section, is characterized by virtuosic piano writing that is similar in style to compositions by nineteenth-century Western European Romantic composers such as Franz Liszt (1811–1886). Here, the right hand plays the spiritual melody in octaves, while offbeat, syncopated sixteenth-note rhythms accompany, adding harmonic support. In this way, a blending of two styles is represented, with the African American Spiritual melody and syncopated rhythms, coexisting with a Western European virtuosic style of piano writing (see example 17).

Ex. 17: Virtuoso style, characteristic of the 19th century Romanticism, mm. 141-146.

⁴³ Marquese Carter, "The Poet and Her Songs: Analyzing the Art Songs of Florence B. Price," (Doctor of Music Dissertation, Indiana University, 2018), 11.

⁴⁴ Megan Reich, "Women's History Month: Florence Price," *All Classical Portland*, March 7, 2018, <https://www.allclassical.org/womens-history-month-florence-price/>.

It is important to note however that Price was careful in her approach to arranging the Spiritual in this work. She made certain to preserve and not obstruct the Spiritual melody. In fact, the accompaniment is “never so elaborate...as to obscure the simplicity of the original tune and the directness of the text.”⁴⁵ Some other examples of spirituals arranged by Price in which she similarly aimed to preserve and not conceal the original melody include *Go Down, Moses*, and *Peter, Go Ring Dem Bells*.

Like Still, Price also used the pentatonic scale in her writing, which was a prevalent hallmark of the Afro-American style.⁴⁶ Below is an excerpt from this work containing the G major pentatonic scale within a descending melody line (see example 18):



Ex. 18: G pentatonic scale, descending, mm. 50-51.

By presenting this scale in a descending or falling motion, Price incorporated a quality that is present in spirituals and in so doing, mirrors the cultural awakening and psychology of her identity as an African American.⁴⁷

Despite coming from a well-respected family with a father who was a dentist and a mother who was a pianist and an amateur singer,⁴⁸ racism had been unavoidable for Price. At the New England Conservatory where she enrolled as an organ and composition major, she identified as a Mexican because her mother wanted her to minimize racial discrimination.⁴⁹ She was also subject to psychological trauma throughout her life, including a particularly distressing incident which caused her family to flee Little Rock and settle in the industrial city of Chicago in 1927: a black man named John Carter was hung from a telephone pole, shot, dragged behind an automobile, and burned in the center of Little Rock’s African American business section, near

⁴⁵ Brown, 93.

⁴⁶ Smith, 49.

⁴⁷ Brown, 127.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 13.

⁴⁹ Barbara Garvey Jackson, “Florence Price, Composer,” *The Black Perspective in Music* 5, no. 1 (1977): 31–43, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1214357>.

her husband's office.⁵⁰ And while Price did experience several major accomplishments during her distinguished career including being the first African-American woman composer to have one of her works performed by a major orchestra during her lifetime⁵¹ as well as conducting the Women's Symphony Orchestra of Chicago,⁵² racism was deeply rooted into the culture of her time. Through her music, Price brings pieces of her identity as an African American to the fore while liberating herself through a new form of musical expression, one that is not restrained by Western European conventions.

Underrepresented composers in the twentieth century including Alexina Louie, William Grant Still, and Florence Price communicate their unique stories through their own musical idioms. While they represent different generations of musicians, these three composers all push boundaries and claim their own voice and form of expression in their music. By studying their works and specifically focusing on how life, death, and spiritually is mirrored in their music, musicians can become better informed of the diverse perspectives and experiences of these composers and ultimately gain a deeper understanding not only of their music but also of how society, as reflected through this and all music, is constantly evolving. It is my belief that it is our social obligation to study works like these because composers not only create beautiful works of art, their works also reflect a narrative that speaks to their unique cultural experiences.

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⁵¹ Slonimsky, p. 791.

⁵² Rae Linda Brown, "The Woman's Symphony Orchestra of Chicago and Florence B. Price's Piano Concerto in One Movement," *American Music* 11, no. 2 (1993): 185–205, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3052554>.

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Musicians' Wellness

Using Yoga Language to Enhance Music Instruction

Dr. Jacqueline Petitto

Yoga, like music-making, allows for total exploration of the body, mind, and spirit. In fact, there are many similarities between practicing yoga and engaging in music study. Indeed, all learning is facilitated by guiding students through this process of constant awareness and objective observation. As such, we are able to notice the breath, different sensations and simply just being. Redirecting our thoughts and viewing them through a holistic lens can reveal the depths of our own resilience, flexibility, and strength. We then quickly realize that nothing can be gained by forcing, overdoing, or engaging in mindless activity. On the other hand, we can gain everything by focusing our minds and purposefully moving through space.

I have always marveled at the way in which most yoga teachers speak about *asanas* (yoga poses) to their students: gently, lovingly, and calmly. Yoga instructors usually employ a soothing voice which helps students relax and surrender to the yoga practice. It seems like this kind of healthy and positive talk, which compels us to slow down and notice what is happening inwards and outwards, might benefit us all in so many facets of life. Why not approach pedagogical guidance, feedback, and directions in this way in our practice as music teachers? I have found myself thinking about the many advantages of reframing the narrative in music instruction based on the language of yoga instruction and the style in which it is verbally delivered.

Students tend to react positively when we encourage and empower them as teachers with affirming and uplifting language. The way in which we communicate to our students really matters. Nurturing, inviting, and non-forceful words can go a long way to calming the anxious and overactive student mind. Teachers can choose vocabulary and syntax that reflect just how much we care about the subject matter, and which assists our students in achieving the best possible learning outcomes. Using imagery and metaphors can help to get the point across. Offering specific and relevant feedback to students and avoiding ambiguous praise or non-specific compliments – as these usually lead nowhere – can inspire greater student success.

Below, I have included some effective directions and cues that I have learned from my yoga teachers over the years. Feel free to explore these on your own and with your students. I have had great results adapting these instructions to music, and hope you will as well.

An invitation to try something makes for a great sentence-starter. Try the following for example:

Allow yourself to...

Let yourself...

Give yourself permission to...

Invite/ Develop...

Cultivate a sense of...

Train yourself to...

Remind yourself to.../ Remember to.../ Be sure to.../ Make sure...

Be mindful of.../ Be aware of...

Bring more mindfulness to.../ Bring more awareness to...

When addressing posture, consider giving these guidelines and reminders a whirl:

Allow the crown of your head to be parallel to the ceiling

Release/ Drop shoulders so that there is maximum space between ears and shoulders

Lengthen and widen your back

Reach down with your tailbone

Engage the core/ Strengthen your core by tucking in your navel

Stack your head on top of your torso so that your spine is aligned

Keep the heart pointing up and out

When sitting, hinge from the hips leading with the heart

Feel centered and grounded

Neck is back and free

Lengthen/ Extend the spine

Let the neck and shoulders be free

Lift the heart up and let it shine

Extend/ Elongate from the sit bones (sitz bones) to the crown of your head

Find more openness and lift in your sternum

Broaden your upper back and shoulder blades

In order to enhance deeper and more mindful breathing, try speaking in these terms:

Breathe in and out

Inhale joy and exhale peace

Allow the breath to be smooth and even

Invite your exhalations to be longer

Listen to your breath and your body

It takes less effort to smile than to frown. Try out the following phrases to invite a smile:

Allow the corners of your mouth to curve up
Now try/ do it with a smile
Retain a sense of humor, no need to be so serious
Think kind thoughts towards your instructor

Remember the importance of keeping things light. Experiment with the following:

Now soften/ with a feeling of lightness
Let go of something...
Remain positive and open
No judgement
Be objective
Just observe and recognize
Try not to take things personally
Move slowly yet deliberately
Be kind and compassionate with yourself and others
If you have reached your edge, back off, you have gone too far
Be authentic and honest with yourself
Just allow yourself to be
Be yourself and be vulnerable
Trust your intuition
Do not let your ego decide or get in the way/ Take the ego out of the equation
Be gentle, kind and friendly with your body
Do what serves you best
It's about the journey not the destination
Detach from the outcome
Stay curious and ready to learn

It is vital for our students to always stay present. Consider using the following phrases to suggest they remain in the present:

Be present, in the moment
Let go from the rest of your day
Refrain from thinking of the past or planning your future
If external thoughts distract you, come back to the breath and gently return to *this* moment/ the present
Be aware of your body, mind, and breath
Notice/ Observe...
Empty/ Rid your mind of thoughts
Train the meditative mind
Allow for self-discovery

Music teachers might consider using these and similar directions, cues and sentence starters when teaching lessons and masterclasses, and even in writing judges' comments when adjudicating. Personally, I find these items especially useful when I work with students who I do not know very well, but also highly effective with my own students. Notice that most of these are invitations to encourage students to feel their way through a task.

In yoga as in music, good teachers exude compassion, generosity, sensitivity, empathy, kindness, warmth, humility, integrity, balance, understanding, adaptability, unconditional acceptance for all, and more. While it is not always easy to find our own authentic teaching voice and style, it can be helpful to strive to act with genuine care and from a place of authenticity. As teachers, we might share and take ownership of our life experiences with our students. As such, we can step into these experiences and let them guide us on our path through life.



*Pianist **Jacqueline Petitto** is an active soloist and chamber musician who has performed domestically and abroad. She has taught at the University of Southern California, University of La Verne, Pasadena City College, Los Angeles City College, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, Colburn Conservatory of Music (where she created a Musician Wellness course), and was Assistant Professor and Director of Keyboard Studies at Long Beach City College. Dr. Petitto's strong commitment to wellness resulted in her appointment as CAPMT Wellness Chair. She has presented at universities, conferences, and for music teacher organizations, and translated a musician wellness book from Spanish into English.*

New Publication Recommendations

The Virtuoso Journey

Gail Lew



LITTLE VIRTUOSO

15 Pieces for Piano

Jakub Metelka

Bärenreiter © 2021

www.baerenreiter.com

BA11569: 24 pp., \$19.99

Levels 4-5¹

Little Virtuoso is a collection of intriguing, exquisite piano pieces that offer a multitude of technical challenges to the intermediate student. This includes thirty-second-note passages, cantabile playing, playing pieces in a variety of meters and different key signatures, ornamentation, contrapuntal passagework, and

achieving clear balance between the hands, to name just a few. Following in the tradition of great Czech composers such as Dvořák, Martinů, and Janáček, Metelka writes pieces with unexpected harmonies and rhythmic novelty. *Swan on Ice* projects an elegant, refined melody that requires careful voicing and use of rubato to achieve an expressive performance of this piece. *Pet Cemetery* is written in the somber key of E flat minor and effectively portrays sadness with its melancholy melodic line. The B section is composed in the style of a nocturne and features similar triplet sixteenth-note passagework as used by Chopin in his beloved C minor and C sharp minor nocturnes. As such, it serves as suitable material for preparing students to play the music of Chopin effectively. The rolling waves of *Calm Ocean* are depicted using gorgeous arpeggiated chords flowing from left hand to right hand. *Devil's Waltz* is intense, agitated, and filled with chromaticism. In this piece, students will be challenged to read treble ledger lines and will need to achieve precise fingering for the fast-moving chromatic passages. A swift flight in *Paper Aeroplane* is conveyed using rapid right-hand sixteenth-note passagework against continuously moving left-hand eighth-note arpeggios. This piece requires facile fingers and careful attention to fingering. *March of the Chicks* is filled with humorous grace-note chirps and staccato peeps.

Recordings of all 15 pieces in the collection can be accessed by clicking on the Multimedia tab at the following [link](#). The pieces are cleverly written, and musically sophisticated. They are also fun to play and will sharpen students' technical skills in preparation for more advanced repertoire. Featured keys include E flat minor, B flat minor, D flat major, C sharp minor, and G sharp minor.

¹ Level guidelines are based on Jane Magrath's literature leveling in *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing, 1995). See page xi.

CONTRASTS IN STYLE

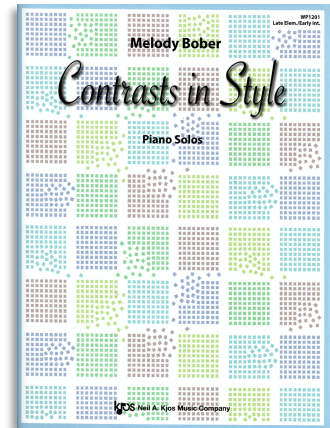
Melody Bober

KJOS Music Press © 2021

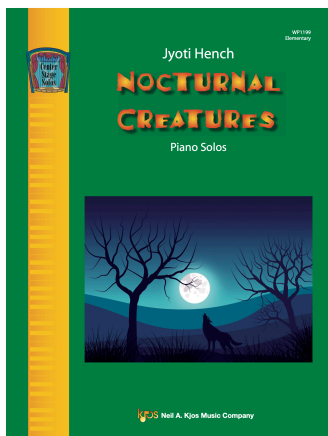
www.kjos.com

WP1201: 24 pp., \$6.95

Levels 3-4



This collection of eight winning solos unsurprisingly offers yet another outstanding set of pieces by Melody Bober. From the expressive and delicate *Watercolor Sunset* to the rousing and upbeat *Celtic Joy*, this collection includes pieces in a wide variety of styles, keys, and tempos. As such, it offers the performer a varied palette of interpretive possibilities. *Eye of the Storm*, written in C minor, is fast, furious, and toccata like. The opening A theme keeps mostly stationary using harmonic fifths and sixths in the left hand. The middle B theme moves up and down the keyboard, played hand over hand, in rapid eighth notes. The storm ends in a powerful flurry of *forte* sixteenth notes. *Siesta Time*, in ternary form, features a dotted habanera rhythmic pattern. The highly syncopated right-hand melodic line is punctuated by half-note triads when the left hand takes over the lively melody in the middle section. The right-hand melodic line then returns and is harmonized in thirds. *Sunny Sonatina* uses an Alberti Bass and though mostly Classical in style, the harmonies provide some contemporary flair. These pianistic solos offer terrific teaching moments, and also provide exciting recital repertoire.



NOCTURNAL CREATURES

Jyoti Hench

KJOS Music Press © 2021

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WP1199: 17 pp., \$6.95

Level 1

There is a demand for original piano repertoire at early levels that is filled with artistic opportunities and imagery. Many pieces at the early elementary level, including some found in method books, do not offer much variety in terms of the five-finger positions, articulation markings, creativity, musicality, or performance gestures used. Jyoti Hench has written a collection, based on nocturnal creatures in the wild that fills this lacuna. These exciting, 'easy-sounds-hard' pieces are filled with pizzazz, and have been carefully crafted to help develop security in note reading and technical skills in the early elementary student. Wild animals hold a certain fascination for our young students and each of these solos serves to spark an imaginative performance.

Written in A minor, *Owl in the Tree* imitates the hoot of the owl at night with subtle dynamic contrasts and ends *pianissimo*. *Sneaky Fox* maintains an F minor tonal center using only accidentals and thereby provides an emphasis on note reading skills. The student will also need to execute the staccato markings to effectively emulate a fox tiptoeing through the forest. *Strolling Skunk* tosses the melodic line from left hand to right hand while the fun lyrics help the student understand how to effectively interpret this piece! The graceful *Deer at Dusk*, in E minor, requires legato pedaling and expressive playing. *Cool*

Coyote is written in an upbeat, rock style. Alternate measures require tapping the piano for percussive accents. The opening left-hand trill sets the stage for the *Glimmering Firefly*. Continuously undulating eighth notes continue the treble-clef glimmer in the final eight measures of this piece as the fireflies fly away. Short staccatos provide an appropriate image for the sharp *Perplexing Porcupine* quills. *Soaring Nighthawk* moves quickly using melodic thirds, fourths, and fifths which continually glide upward in long, legato four-measure phrases. This piece also requires legato pedaling. Brava to Jyoti for creating this rousing collection of imaginative vignettes for the elementary-level student.

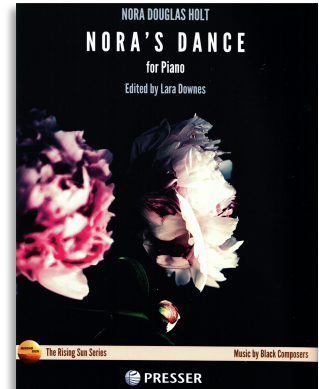
NORA'S DANCE

Nora Douglas Holt, edited by Lara Downes
Presser © 2021

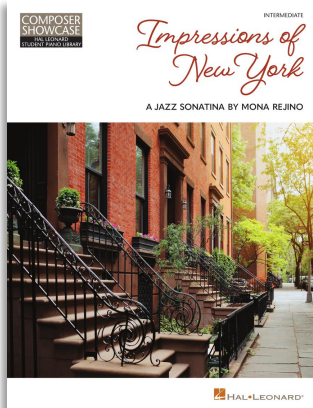
www.presser.com

140-40131: sheet music, \$9.99

Level 8



Written in a combination of salon and ragtime styles, this delightful vignette by African-American composer, Nora Douglas Holt (c.1885–1974) will captivate any audience and deserves to become a staple of the recital repertoire. Inspired by African-American Antebellum rural dance music, technical and musical elements include rolled chords, descending arpeggios, syncopation, chromaticism, figurations in thirds, and challenging simultaneous left- and right-hand sixteenth note passagework. Unfortunately, of the 200 pieces Holt was known to have composed, this is the only existing solo piano work. Her remaining compositions were stolen from a storage locker and have never resurfaced.² This new edition, edited by Lara Downes, includes added accents and dynamic suggestions but would also have benefited from a few well-placed fingering suggestions. The romantic elements in this work will be enhanced by thoughtful use of the pedal. The motives developed in this piece are charming, rhythmic, and memorable. As such, this piano solo promises to be an unforgettable highlight on any recital program. A stylish performance by Dr. Samantha Ege can be accessed on YouTube at the following [link](#).



IMPRESSIONS OF NEW YORK

Mona Rejino

Hal Leonard © 2021

<https://www.halleonard.com>

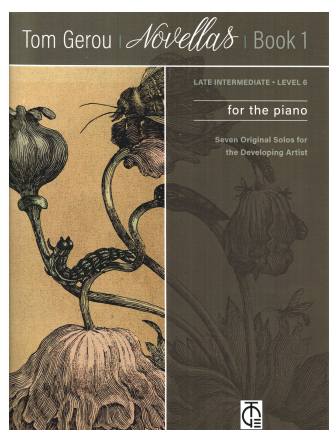
HL00364212: 16 pp., \$8.99

Levels 4-5

This three-movement jazz sonatina captures the sights and sounds of one of America's favorite cities. There is an air of charm and sophistication in *Strolling the Upper West Side*. It depicts a casual, quiet, and leisurely walk

² Anastasiia Pavlenko, "Negro Dance Op. 25 No. 1, by Nora Holt" *Hidden Voices: Piano Music by Black Women Composers*, edited by Alejandro Cremaschi (University of Colorado, Boulder), Fall 2019, <https://www.colorado.edu/project/hidden-voices/2020/11/10/negro-dance-op-25-no-1-nora-holt>.

with subtle dynamic changes and enough time at each *ritardando* to stop at a deli or coffee shop, while the syncopated beat gets things moving again. New York is synonymous with a lively nightlife and midnight jazz jam sessions. Appropriately, the second movement, *Midnight in Brooklyn*, evokes a jazz nightclub with its generous use of syncopation, laid-back tempo, variety of seventh chords, swung eighths, and faster triplet passagework. *Grand Central Station* is filled with hustle, bustle, excitement, driving energy, strong accents, and the use of syncopation and hemiola. Mona has truly captured the busy and intoxicating excitement of New York City. Teachers might consider having three students each play a movement of the sonatina as the grand finale on their next recital program. The *fortissimo* conclusion will elicit thunderous applause! Mona's recording of *Grand Central Station* can be heard on YouTube at the following [link](#).



NOVELLAS BOOKS 1 and 2

Tom Gerou

Tom Gerou Music © 2021

www.tomgeroumusic.com

24 pp., \$9.99

TMG00021 Book 1: Level 6

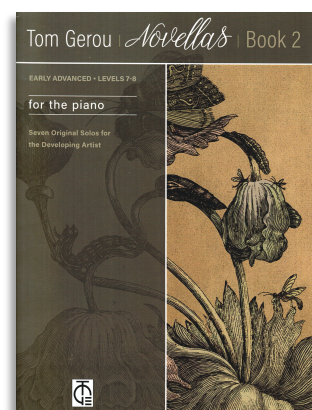
TMG00022 Book 2: Levels 7-8

Novellas Books 1 and 2 come highly recommended. This series is a valuable library addition for the teacher who is looking for performance pieces in contemporary styles that will both inspire and motivate students.

Moreover, these pieces serve as an exceptional example of accessible twenty-first century compositions that are artistic, as well as musically exciting.

Book 1 opens with a continuously flowing melodic line in the A section of *Menuetto al fresco*. The more chordal B section features cross-hand playing. As the A section returns, there is a short cadenza which provides opportunities for students to add some rubato, and dynamic shading. The *Spice of Life*, with its swung rhythms and jazzy stylings challenges the student to switch from swung eighth notes to triplets. The upbeat tune, staccatos and well-placed accents make this a showstopper. *Vaudvillium*, harkens back to the age of Vaudeville. In this piece, students can enjoy portraying various stage acts including acrobats, comedians, and dancers. *Saturnine* is a blues piece with swung eighths played in a slow jazzy style. Gerou rounds out the collection with the colorful, Hawaiian inspired *A hui hou*, the chic French *La vie élégante*, and the buoyant *Moto perpetuo* in 5/8 meter. For audio samples of Book 1 visit the following [link](#).

Book 2 comprises early-advanced repertoire while containing elements found in advanced concert pieces: cadenzas, melodies played in octaves, extensive arpeggiated accompaniment patterns, fast thirty-second-note passagework, unusual meters, and rapid tempos. *Evening on the River Nile* is already a student favorite in my studio. The blending of Turkish, Arabic, Egyptian, and Western elements sprinkled with haunting chords throughout creates a truly mesmerizing composition. *Tango ritornello* pays homage to Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992), the master of Argentinian Tango. In this piece, there are moments where one can hear the strumming of a guitar as well as scale



passages that might be played on the Argentinian bandoneon. *Trireme toccata*, a powerful recital piece with a tempo of dotted half note = 80 in 12/8 meter, requires facile fingers and a brilliant technique. Patterned to lie comfortably under the hands with hand over hand crossings, the abrupt chord changes are easily navigated. For audio samples of Book 2, visit the following [link](#).



MOMENTS IN TIME BOOK 1

Mary Leaf

FJH Music Company © 2021

www.fjhmusic.com

FJH2354: 24 pp., \$6.95

Level 5-6

Mary Leaf presents a wonderful contribution to contemporary repertoire with this attractive collection of intermediate solos. *At Break of Day* is a quiet and pensive solo. The melancholy melodic line in A minor, moving forward in eighth notes and triplet sixteenths, is set against an arpeggiated left-hand eighth-note accompaniment. *Night Pursuit* is a fast-moving vibrant piece that uses melodic fifths in the left hand. The right hand plays a tone cluster pattern that covers the entire range of the keyboard. The tonal center of these cluster chords changes every two measures as the pattern ascends. *Sparkling Fountain* is a brilliant etude that moves continuously up and down the keyboard, much like Chopin's etude, Op. 25, no. 12. Dynamics range from *piano* to *fortissimo* with crescendos and diminuendos indicated on ascending and descending sixteenth-note passages respectively. More subdued, introspective pieces in the collection include *Rain on the Window*, *Chanson d'espoir*, and *Chanson de paix*. This set aims to encourage exquisite musical artistry and nuanced performance in the intermediate student.

THE JOURNEY

Melody Bober

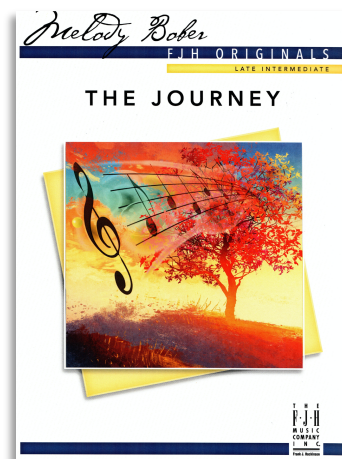
FJH Music Company © 2021

www.fjhmusic.com

S4180: sheet music, \$3.95

Level 8

This piano solo is a valuable library addition for teachers looking for a show-stopping contemporary recital piece that can inspire students to excel at the piano. Melody Bober does a fantastic job of offering extraordinary, and challenging pieces that successfully allow students to show off their technical prowess. Technical elements include octave passages, crossing hands, large chords, pedal effects for creating color and mood, rapid tempos, various articulation markings, and wide dynamic contrasts. The imposing and impressive chords beginning in measure one set the listener up for the drama to come. The material in the B section is cleverly alternated between the hands thus allowing the student to easily execute it at the extremely fast tempo. The triumphant opening chords return played *fortissimo* and are followed by a majestic tremolo and a powerful, accented low E flat bass conclusion. This exciting piece is certain to be a student and audience favorite!



SO FAR...

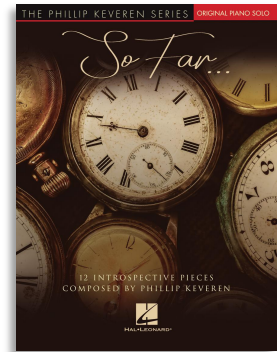
Phillip Keveren

Hal Leonard © 2021

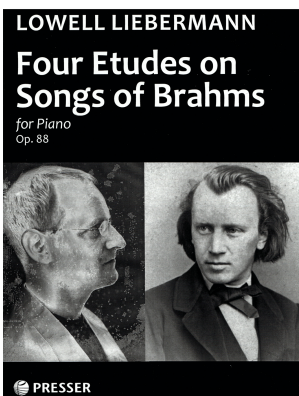
<https://www.halleonard.com>

HL00366023: 48 pp., \$14.99

Levels 7-8



There are so many creative and imaginative musical possibilities in this expressive collection of twelve original piano works by Phillip Keveren. *Pacific Moonlight*, a California student and teacher favorite, depicts a serene ocean with dynamic swells, one climactic *forte* wave, and *pianissimo* sections that possibly convey the idea of tiptoeing in the sand ever so hesitantly and carefully. *Isn't It Grand?* is filled with rich, jazz harmonies. This slow ballad is reminiscent of Gershwin and includes melody played in octaves, quartal harmony, rapid thirty-second and sixty-fourth-note passages, and rolled chords. Composed in ternary form, *Greener Pastures* features some country twangs (grace notes), dotted rhythms, changing meters throughout the piece and a gorgeous C-major melody in the central B Section set in 12/8 time that returns in B flat major just before the Coda set in 4/4 meter. Throughout the collection, Keveren changes keys and meters within pieces, uses flowing left-hand arpeggiated accompaniments, lush, contemporary harmonies, while providing students with opportunities to focus on phrasing, color, artistic performance, and interpretation. A digital recording of the entire book, or selected tracks, is available at the following [link](#).



FOUR ETUDES ON SONGS OF BRAHMS OP. 88

Lowell Liebermann

Presser © 2021

www.presser.com

110-41786: 16 pp., \$16.99

Level 10 (Advanced)

Four Etudes on Songs of Brahms, Op. 88 are transcriptions for piano solo of songs about romance originally set for voice and piano by Johannes Brahms (1833–1897). The Brahms originals are captivating musical works and all

have texts about longing, love, and loss. In the hands of Liebermann, the songs are truly transformed while preserving their Brahmsian quintessence. Liebermann is a pianist and shows clear understanding of the capabilities of the instrument in these transcriptions. In his hands, the accompaniments soar across the entire keyboard and the beautiful melodies are reborn using the full capability and range of the keyboard. The four Brahms songs included in the collection are *Muss es eine Trennung geben* (*Must We Then Once More Be Parted*), Op. 33, no. 12, *Es tönt ein voller Harfenklang* (*The Full Sound of Harps Ring Out*), Op. 17, no. 1, *An ein Veilchen* (*To a Violet*), Op. 49, no. 2, and *Eine gute, gute Nacht* (*A Good, Good Night*), Op. 59, no. 6. The harmonies, tempos, dynamics and expressive markings of both Brahms's original compositions and Liebermann's additions mirror the texts. For example, in *Eine gute, gute Nacht*, the key of A minor and delayed resolution of the leading tone echoes the text, "If only you would not so cruelly fuel the fire in my soul." This is not the Liebermann of *Gargoyles* with its adventurous harmonies. Pianists will discover how Liebermann has transfigured Brahms's *Lieder* melodies with a

fusion of Romantic and Impressionistic harmonies, extended arpeggiation figures running up and down the keyboard, and lots of opportunity to play with rubato, dynamic contrasts, and clarity of voicing. *Eine gute, gute Nacht* is accessible for a student at Level 9. A recording of the whole set played by celebrated South African pianist Petronel Malan can be found at the following [link](#).

PLUM BLOSSOM

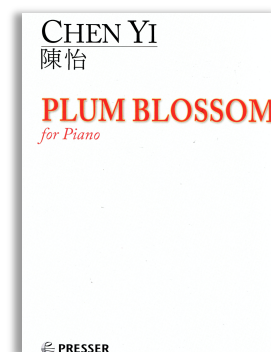
Chen Yi

Presser © 2021

www.presser.com

110-41827: sheet music, \$12.99

Level 10 (Advanced)



As a Chinese-born, American composer, a hallmark of Chen Yi's compositions is to combine Chinese and Western musical elements. Chen Yi's exquisite fantasy, *Plum Blossom* is a set of theme and variations based on the Cantonese children's song "Moonlight." The four-minute work would make for an attractive addition to any competition, jury, or university-level recital program. The piece features a polyphonic texture, folk elements of Chinese song, and the portrayal of Chinese instruments such as the Chinese gong and the guzheng, cadenza-like passages, atonal tone clusters, quartal harmony, and virtuosic bravura passagework. The opening measures present the thematic material with the right- and left-hand playing in unison. The initial pitch material, stated in mixolydian mode on A, is then interrupted by the percussive sound of the gong as dissonant chords clash in both hands. The counterpoint continues freely throughout the first section until the melody reappears, transposed, inverted, and reimagined in a different rhythmic configuration. The theme is varied again, this time played in the left hand and stretched out rhythmically and harmonized in fourths and fifths against a contrapuntal line in the right hand. Next, the thematic material is obscured in a rapid flurry of octaves, followed by powerful *fortissimo* chords in both hands. The final chord must be caught using the sostenuto pedal as the charming "Moonlight" melody reappears suddenly, transposed once again and played moderately softly in octaves. The final note is held until the sound dissipates. A recording of *Plum Blossom* performed by Ting Luo can be heard at the following [link](#).

All of the pieces covered in this article will be performed at the CAPMT Conference on October 16 at 4:15 p.m. Join Gail Lew and Dr. Omri Shimron in a fast-paced, exciting session focused on these pieces. Marcia Stearns from Bookmark Music will be on site with a complete music display of all of these works.



Gail Lew is an editor, arranger, piano teacher, clinician, and nationally-respected leader in the field of piano pedagogy. She is an independent studio teacher in the San Francisco Bay Area, a member of CAPMT District 2 and a judge for state, national, and international piano events. Gail holds degrees and credentials in piano performance, music history, and music education. Highlights of her 30-year career in music include her tenure as senior piano editor for Kjos Music, director of keyboard publications for Warner Bros. Music, editor of the *California Music Teacher* magazine, and contributing editor to *American Music Teacher* magazine. Gail maintains close ties with major publishing companies in the United States, Canada, and Europe and presents workshops nationwide on contemporary music focusing on living composers.

Coda

What is a favorite piece of repertoire to assign to a student as an exciting challenge piece or to reignite their excitement for music when they have hit a bit of a learning plateau or slump?



One of my favorite pieces to assign to an intermediate moving to late-intermediate piano student is *The Storm*, Op. 109, no. 13 by Friedrich Burgmüller (1806–1874). This is an immediately appealing study for a student of this level (it is included as an etude at RCM Level 8) because of its energetic tempo, and dramatic dynamics including rapid and vivid crescendos and diminuendos. In addition to being instantaneously musically enticing, it is also a highly effective piece for developing elements of technique and artistry in the intermediate student.

To give a commanding performance of this study, the student must master the swift sixteenth-note passages and achieve fluid octave tremolandos. They will also need to work on accomplishing excellent tonal balance and clear voicing of chords, listen for scrupulous pedaling, and strive to play with an extensive and dramatically effective array of dynamics. In addition, this piece provides opportunities for exploring the relationship between tone color, timing, and storytelling through music. For example, at each modulation, the teacher might address the change in character or mood that accompanies the change of key and investigate how best to convey this at the piano in terms of sound quality, dynamic, and pacing. The teacher could also explain the theoretical relationship between the keys used, i.e. the piece modulates from D minor to both the relative (F) and parallel (D) majors. As such, this study serves as a terrific vehicle for teaching elements of music theory too.

All in all, *The Storm* is a teaching gem and a favorite for piano students to learn and play! For a fine performance of the storm, visit the following [link](#).

A few other piano pieces at various levels that tend to appeal to students include:

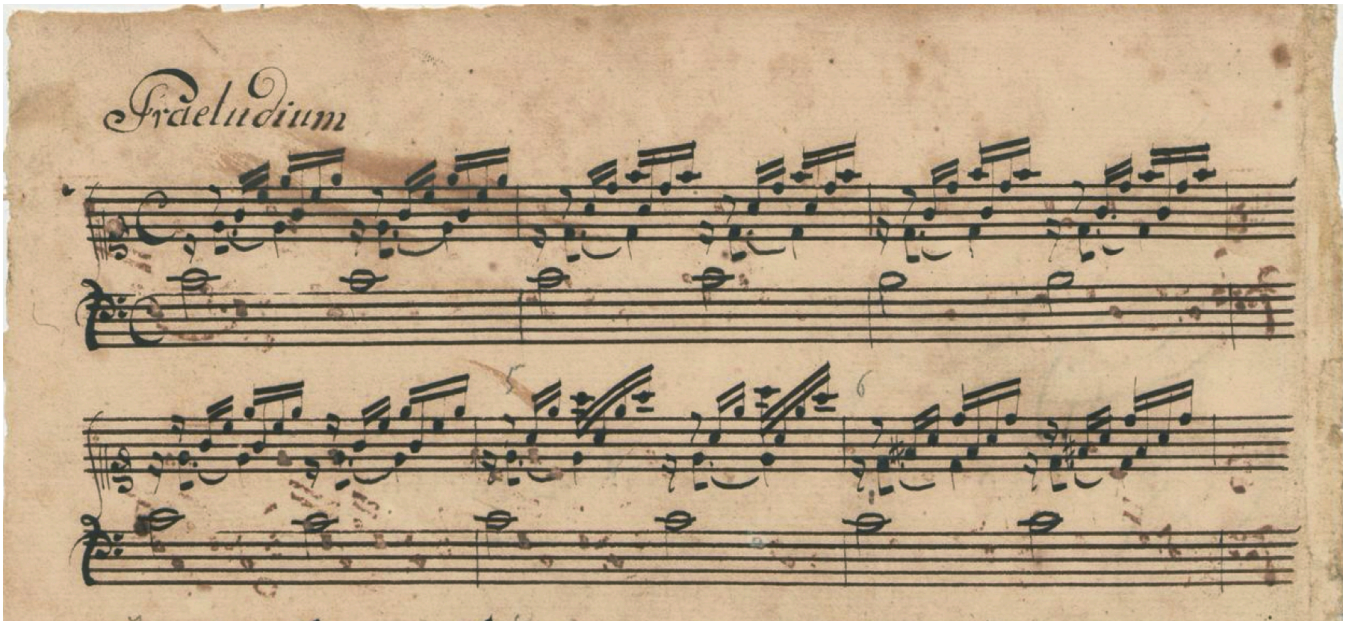
- *Thunderstorm* (RCM Prep A Repertoire) by Dianne Goolkasian Rhabee (b. 1938). This aleatoric piece can be taught quickly by rote very early on in lessons and offers students a chance to create their own storm using three simple musical elements as follows: An octave C Major scale divided between the hands, played staccato (representing raindrops) for which the register, tempo, and tonal shaping can be varied; low tone clusters in the bass played with both hands and damper pedal (depicting thunder); and rising right-hand glissandos (symbolizing lightning). Rhabee's other pedagogical piano music is compositionally ingenious, and pedagogically thoughtful. It can provide an enticing challenge for a certain kind of student. Teachers might investigate the Modern Miniatures collections of Rhabee's music published by FJH and edited by Helen Marlais. For a performance of *Thunderstorm*, visit the following [link](#).

- *Robots* (RCM Level 1 Repertoire) by Anne Crosby Gaudet (b. 1968). Canadian pianist, harpist, teacher, and composer Anne Crosby Gaudet writes highly engaging pedagogical music at the elementary to early intermediate levels that typically lends itself effectively to storytelling in music. Her mechanical *Robots* at RCM level 1 is a student favorite. Moreover, teachers might explore any of her charming and clever piano pieces as included in the RCM Celebration Series 2015 Piano Syllabus including *Starfish at Night* (RCM Prep B Repertoire), *Celebration* (RCM Level 1 Etudes), *Angelfish*, and *Periwinkle Twinkle* (RCM level 2 Repertoire), *Funny Puppy* (RCM Level 3 Repertoire), *Dreamcatcher* (RCM Level 4 Repertoire) and *Dragonfly Scherzo* (RCM level 5 Etudes). Performances of all of these pieces as played by the composer can be found on YouTube. Take a listen to the composer's performance of *Robots* at the following [link](#).

- *Lyric Preludes in Romantic Style* by William Gillock (1917–1993). These "24 short pieces in all keys" are a favorite in my studio. I often assign them as a set of quick studies, i.e. the student is tasked with learning one or two of these short descriptive character pieces each week. The pieces are varied in tempo, mood, and more yet all are technically and musically accessible to the intermediate piano student (RCM levels 4-7) and serve as outstanding teaching material. Visit the following [link](#) for a lovely complete performance of Gillock's charming *Lyric Preludes*.

– Editor

Dr. [Stephen Pierce](#) serves on the keyboard studies faculty at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music, and teaches at Interlochen Arts Camp each summer. He also owns and operates a private piano studio in Pasadena, CA. At present, he is CAPMT District 9 Director, CAPMT Collegiate Chapters state chair, Editor of CAPMT Connect, an RCM Academic Ambassador, an RCM Certified Piano Teacher, and member of the RCM College of Examiners.



As a horn and theory teacher, this was an interesting question for me to answer. Unlike piano or violin repertoire, there are very few well-known compositions written for horn until a player advances to an intermediate level. When students are ready, I love assigning the first or third movements from the *Concerto for Horn No. 3 in E flat Major, K. 447* by W. A. Mozart (1756–1791). This is a ‘rite of passage’ piece and is often one of the reasons a student has chosen to play the horn in the first place. Either movement serves as a fabulous motivator for a student whose interest in music and the horn more specifically is beginning to plateau. Both movements are also perfect for teaching students to play with light and bouncy articulation, an important technique that will be needed in many horn pieces to come. For a stunning full performance of this concerto, visit this [link](#).

As a theory teacher, I like to give the “Prelude in C Major,” BWV 846, from the *Well-Tempered Clavier* by J. S. Bach (1685–1750) to my advanced students as the first assignment for completing a full harmonic analysis of a piece. While many might consider this piece hackneyed, overused, and overplayed, my students tend to love it and have often played it by the time they reach this level of theory. It serves as an excellent piece for identifying all types of seventh chords and secondary dominants and really encourages my students to consider key relationships, almost measure by measure. Visit the following [YouTube link](#) for a little background information and a full analysis of this well-known piece.



[Carrie Campbell](#) received her Bachelor of Music in Music Education from the University of Georgia, and her Master’s in Horn Performance from Yale University. Carrie is currently Director of Programs at the Community School of Music and Arts (CSMA) in Mountain View where she also teaches horn, music theory, ear training, and music history. Carrie is a member of the CAPMT Santa Clara Valley Chapter, as well as an RCM Regional Representative, and member of the RCM College of Examiners.

„Der Jongleur“

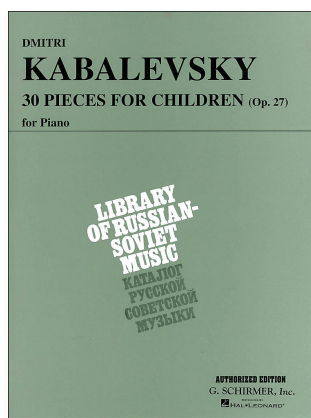


For a piano student who is on the cusp of advanced repertoire, I love to assign “Der Jongleur” (The Juggler) by Ernst Toch (1887–1964), which is the third piece from his 3 *Burlesques*, Op. 31. Exciting and flashy, this short composition marked *Molto vivo* (*Sehr lebhaft*) impresses with its speed and flair, but is easier to play than it appears. This piano showstopper utilizes the entire range of the keyboard and features fast passage-work, double-note broken and blocked thirds, chromatic broken chords with octave leaps, and rapid-fire alternating dyads between the hands, culminating in a triple-forte finale to a glissando finish. The middle *martellato* section has both hands overlapping in alternating harmonic dyads, necessitating clear voicing of the theme (which is shared between the hands). The wide dynamic range utilized and marked rhythmic accents are also key components of this piece.

To effectively build to a climax and showcase the piece’s wild character and sense of surprise, three things are essential: the dynamics must be meticulously observed, the rhythm executed with precision; and the *vivo* tempo maintained with absolute control. The *fortississimo* finale, marked *quasi xylophone*, requires power and strength. With each hand at its respective outer edge of the keyboard, the left hand sustains chordal tremolandos while the right hand reprises the *martellato* theme in sixteenths. The quirky and at times zany character of *Der Jongleur* is instantly captivating, and readily allows for the student to craft an imaginative narrative. Teachers can stimulate their student’s imagination by asking questions like, who is this juggler? Is this a comedic juggling act, perpetually on the verge of possible disaster? What exactly is being juggled? And, what happens at the end of the piece in the glissando flourish? Once mastered, this piece is highly effective in delighting listeners. It can also reignite a student’s interest in piano while taking their playing to new heights. For a terrific performance of the piece, visit the following [link](#).

Pasadena native [Crystal Rivette](#) is a doctoral student majoring in Piano Performance in the studio of Antoinette Perry at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music. She also maintains a private piano studio, and is also a piano faculty member and Artist Certificate Director at Azusa Pacific University at present. In addition, she currently serves as the Vice President of the MTNA USC Collegiate Chapter.





The *Etude in A Minor*, Op. 27, No. 3 (RCM Level 7 Etudes) by Dmitri Kabalevsky (1904–1987) is a guaranteed motivator for the intermediate piano student. As part of the well-known and beloved piano set, *30 Children's Pieces*, Op. 27, this particular work has the potential of adding 'rocket fuel' to a student's interest in piano, especially at those times when their 'motivation tank' may be running on empty! With its speedy but accessible scales and driving left-hand two-note slur figures, studying and performing this satisfying piece provides the gratification and excitement that students yearn for.

Rather short in length and consisting of only seventeen measures, this *Etude* explores the A natural minor scale in different configurations for the right hand (with a few instances of harmonic minor) against a two-note slur figure in the left hand, producing a rhythmic and breathless character. The piece's motion continues to flow forward in the wild middle part, which starts with a shocking pianissimo giving way to a plunging B flat major scale played in a *forte* dynamic with the right hand, a great example of Neapolitan-type usage in an intermediate-level piano piece. The student will especially enjoy the long four-octave scale at the close of the piece cleverly written in a continuous (1-2-3-4) fingering pattern to the top of the piano, followed by a restatement of the Neapolitan chord within the final chord progression.

With some up-front strategies for addressing the potential challenges with the independent hand work required to play the slur figures against the scales, and a rather daring left-hand eighth-note passage catapulting downward against the B flat scale pattern, this piece could be a 'quick study' for a student who is already well-versed in scale-playing. The student can benefit from the imagery this piece brings forth, literally, since the music makes one feel as if they are on a roller coaster ride! Furthermore, this *Etude* serves as a fine study in facility, melodic shaping, and dramatic pacing. A performance favorite, the *Etude in A Minor*, Op. 27, No. 3 can serve as part of a set of works for evaluations and recitals, as well as a stand-alone barn burner with exciting rewards for the student and audience! For a scintillating performance of this piece, visit the following [link](#).

[Alison Edwards](#), Associate Professor of Piano Pedagogy and Piano Area Coordinator at the California State University (CSU), Fullerton School of Music, serves on the editorial committee for CAPMT Connect. She received her Master of Music degree in Piano Performance at USC and her Bachelor of Music degree at CSU Fullerton, having studied piano with Earle Voorhies, Dr. Stewart Gordon, and Daniel Pollock.



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