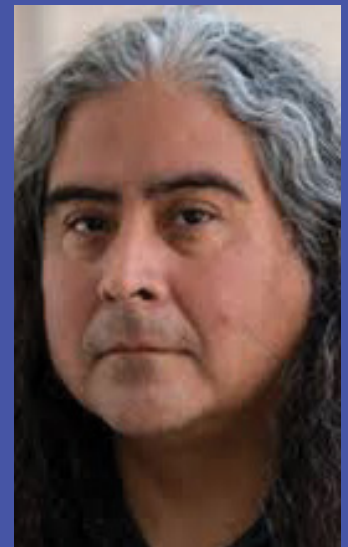


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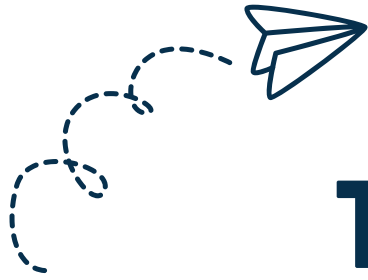
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educators who contributed
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PAMELA D. PIKE
Editor-in-Chief and Chief Content Director

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for More Composers in our Studio



PAMELA D. PIKE *Editor-in-Chief and Chief Content Director*

“The content of this issue is rich, and we know that you will return to it for ideas and inspiration throughout this academic year and as you prepare for the next.”

Understanding cultural and musical context improves student engagement during music learning and interpretation during performance. To bring attention to composers and create camaraderie within my piano studio, I feature a “composer of the month.” In addition to learning about the composer and where they grew up and worked (or *still work* for living composers), all students learn music created by that person. When I had a large private studio, the culmination of each month included group classes with similarly leveled student groups where we performed our composer’s music and engaged in activities and games related to our highlighted composer. Now, with a smaller studio where my students play at several disparate levels, the shared endeavor of studying the life and influences of a composer, then interpreting their music at our joint recitals, expands my students’ commitment to the value of performing with integrity and honoring the person behind the notes on the printed page.

Perhaps because we have a healthy amount of teaching music for the piano that spans many time periods and performance levels, it can be overwhelming to introduce lesser-known works into our teaching repertoire. Recently, I was struck by an intermediate-level woodwind recital that relied heavily on works of living composers who wrote technically challenging music in different styles. While music publishers have long served as gatekeepers to materials that we employ, the advent of self-publishing, sharing via the internet, and socially relevant research on musicians has opened a window into the world of previously unavailable teaching music. If we operate from a place of scarcity (of time and other resources) we may resist including new repertoire into our students’ lessons. We believe that we may have to exclude favorites in order to include different music, but there is likely room to explore. Many teachers have discovered that much of the newer or culturally relevant music resonates with their students and engages them throughout the learning process, allowing them to develop technical and musical

skills, and learn even more music as their practice efficiency improves. Viewed from this perspective, by creating space in the curriculum for high-quality new or unfamiliar music, students are engaged in robust piano study in ways that are personally meaningful and educationally rewarding.

Keeping up with new music releases and incorporating different repertoire into the curriculum is a challenge for busy professional teachers. Having reputable sources to discover appropriately leveled repertoire¹ saves teachers time as the music has been vetted for quality. Young students and young professionals are seeking and finding music that can easily be incorporated into our young students’ curricula. In this issue of the *Piano Magazine*, we feature articles about music that may be unfamiliar to many of us but worthy of our attention. Pianist Connor Chee’s article highlights eight North American Indigenous composers whose music is noteworthy. Articles written by the 2024 *Piano Magazine* Collegiate Essay Competition winners feature piano music by composers from countries outside of the United States that would be a welcomed addition to many piano students’ repertoire. There are also articles to help us prepare students for piano competitions and performances as we head into the winter months.

The content of this issue is rich, and we know that you will return to it for ideas and inspiration throughout this academic year and as you prepare for the next. ■

NOTES

¹ High-quality annotated teaching reference books, such as Jane Magrath’s *Piano Literature for Teaching and Performance* (Piano Education Press, 2021), are excellent sources of music from well- and lesser-known composers of each time period. Websites devoted to promoting music by underrepresented composers, such as *A Seat at the Piano*, are good resources for teachers, too. Peer-reviewed publications and journals also feature robust reviews and articles about newly discovered or recent compositions by current and here-to-fore dismissed or forgotten piano composers.

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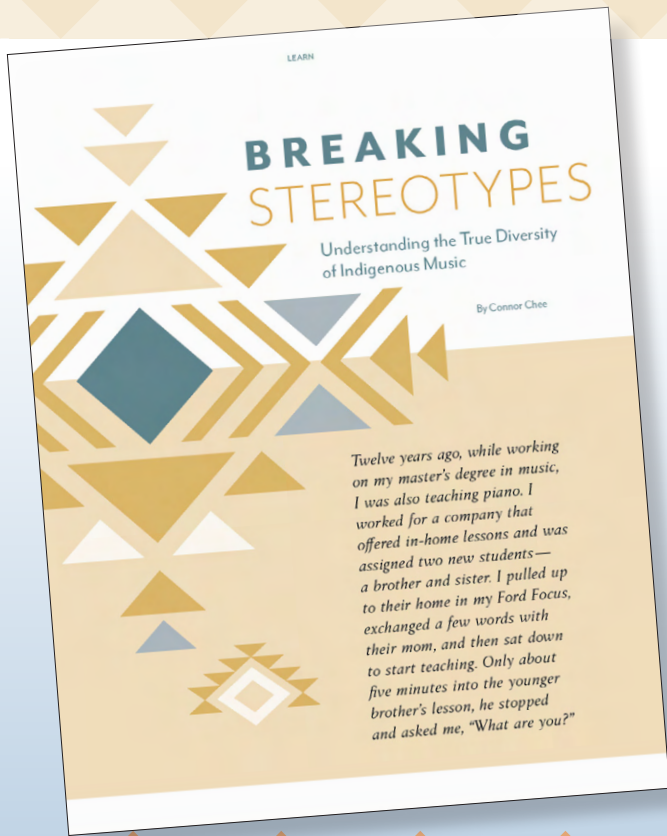
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BREAKING STEREOTYPES

*Indigenous Composers Defining
New Musical Frontiers*

By Connor Chee



The autumn 2024 *Piano Magazine* article, “**Breaking Stereotypes,**” explored the deeply ingrained misconceptions surrounding Indigenous music and how important it is to approach these traditions with an open mind. For many, Indigenous music conjures images of static, ancient traditions—locked in time and space, unchanged by modern influences. But this couldn’t be further from the truth. Indigenous music, like any art form, is dynamic, evolving, and as complex as the many cultures from which it originates.

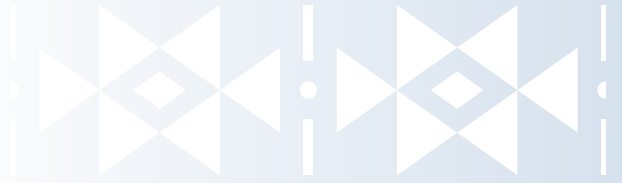
Today, Indigenous composers are redefining what it means to create music, blending traditional elements with contemporary sounds, working across genres, and in some cases, pushing the boundaries of what music itself can be.

Here, a group of composers who are challenging the stereotypes surrounding Indigenous music are introduced. Each of them brings a unique perspective to the musical landscape, crafting works that defy simplistic categorization. The works of these seven composers are proof that Indigenous music is not confined to the past but is very much alive and thriving in the present. Their work speaks to the diversity of modern Indigenous music and serves as a reminder that Indigenous composers should be given the freedom to explore new ideas, without being pigeonholed by expectations.

Raven Chacon (Diné)

Perhaps no one epitomizes breaking musical barriers quite like Raven Chacon. In 2022, he became the first Native composer to win the Pulitzer Prize in music for his piece *Voiceless Mass*, a powerful and avant-garde work that challenges our understanding of what music is supposed to be. Chacon is known for his experimental approach, working across media such as noise music, chamber music, and visual art installations. His music does not always reference his Navajo heritage directly, but rather embodies the spirit of innovation and exploration that drives his work as a composer.

In *Voiceless Mass*, Chacon utilizes silence as a compositional tool, creating tension and unsettling spaces where the absence of sound carries as much weight as the sounds themselves. The piece, composed for organ and ensemble, explores ideas of representation and marginalization—who has a voice and who does not. Chacon's music defies the notion that Indigenous composers must focus solely on traditional elements, offering instead a modern and avant-garde take on composition that breaks free from expectation.



His [Chacon's] music does not always reference his Navajo heritage directly, but rather embodies the spirit of innovation and exploration that drives his work as a composer.

C. Chee





Jessica McMann/V. Jessica Sparvier-Wells (Cree)

Jessica McMann, who is in the process of reclaiming her birth name and will soon be known as Virginia Jessica Sparvier-Wells, is a composer and flutist whose work artfully merges classical music with Indigenous traditions. Her compositions and performances are deeply connected to land, Indigenous identity, history, and language, reflecting a rich engagement with her Cree heritage. She often weaves Cree language and cultural elements into her music, enriching her classical training with a distinct cultural voice. McMann's creative practice extends beyond traditional composition, focusing on land-based creation, where the themes of connection, disconnection, and home emerge as central to her work. This approach emphasizes the powerful ties between music, place, and identity, as she explores the intersections between the personal and the cultural, grounding her soundscapes in both the physical and spiritual aspects of Indigenous life.

Her work is a reminder that Indigenous composers are not bound by one medium or cultural tradition. McMann's compositions break away from the stereotype that Indigenous music exists in a vacuum, disconnected from Western classical music or contemporary soundscapes. Instead, she skillfully weaves her cultural heritage into her music, making it clear that these two worlds can coexist and enrich one another.

Jeremy Dutcher (Wolastoqiyik)

Jeremy Dutcher is an artist whose work defies easy classification. A classically trained tenor and performer, Dutcher's album *Wolastoqiyik Lintuwakonawa* won the Polaris Music Prize for its blend of classical and Indigenous Wolastoqiyik music. He recorded the album after a research project on archival recordings of traditional Wolastoqiyik songs at the Canadian Museum of History, many of which are no longer being passed down to the tribe's youth. What makes Dutcher's work on this album particularly powerful is how it incorporates archival recordings of traditional Wolastoqiyik songs, reworking them into new, contemporary forms that include their traditional singing style.

By bringing the voices of his ancestors into the present, Dutcher's music is a dialogue between the past and the future. His songs are a testament to the idea that Indigenous music is not static or locked in the past but is a living, evolving tradition. Dutcher shows that Indigenous musicians can both honor their heritage and innovate within it, creating music that is as forward-thinking as it is deeply rooted in cultural memory.

By bringing the voices of his ancestors into the present, Dutcher's music is a dialogue between the past and the future. His songs are a testament to the idea that Indigenous music is not static or locked in the past but is a living, evolving tradition.

C. Chee



Find elementary piano music by
six of these featured composers in
Weaving Sounds: Elementary Piano Pieces
by *Native and Indigenous Composers*,

compiled and edited by Connor Chee and
Renata Yazzie (Piano Education Press, 2024).

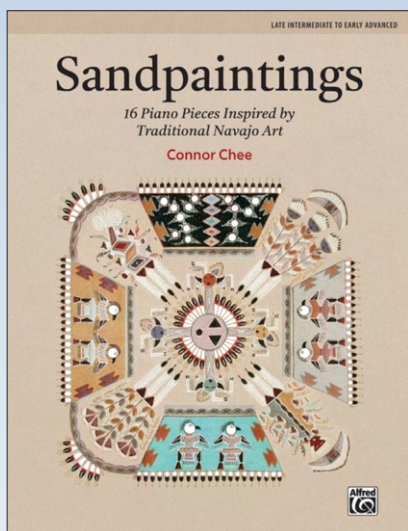
Dawn Avery	<i>Kenhteke (Seeds)</i>
Connor Chee	<i>Cradleboard Song</i>
Brent Michael Davids	<i>Catch the Beat</i>
Sonny-Ray Day Rider	<i>Beast Paws</i>
Beverley McKiver	<i>Mushroom Ballet</i>
V. Jessica Sparvier-Wells	<i>pîwan</i>

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Beverley McKiver (Anishinaabe)

Composer Beverley McKiver's work is an example of how Indigenous composers are redefining the boundaries of classical music.

McKiver, who is Anishinaabe, has a background in classical piano, but her compositions often incorporate themes from her cultural heritage. Her works range from piano solos to choral pieces, and she is passionate about using her music to explore issues of identity, culture, and storytelling.

McKiver's compositions blend Western musical traditions with Indigenous storytelling, creating works that challenge the idea that Indigenous composers are limited to one genre or style. Consider McKiver's *Canadian Floral Emblems*, inspired by the official flowers of Canada's ten provinces and three territories. At first glance, these pieces might not fit the stereotypical expectations of what "Indigenous" music should sound like. Yet, they are inherently Indigenous because they are shaped by McKiver's identity and perspective as an Anishinaabe composer. Her cultural heritage informs her creative process, weaving in her connection to nature, land, and storytelling, even though the music itself doesn't conform to common assumptions about Indigenous sound. By drawing on both classical forms and her Anishinaabe heritage, McKiver demonstrates that Indigenous music can occupy multiple spaces at once, offering a unique perspective that enriches both classical and contemporary music.

Brent Michael Davids (Mohican/Munsee Lenape)

Brent Michael Davids is a renowned composer and a trailblazer for Native equity and representation, who has been challenging stereotypes for decades. His works frequently incorporate Indigenous instruments, such as handmade quartz flutes. His scores are not only musically innovative but also pieces of visual art, pushing beyond traditional expectations. Davids centers Native perspectives in his work, both through his innovative compositions and his commitment to advocacy. As co-founder of the award-winning Native American Composer Apprentice Project (NACAP), he empowers Indigenous youth to compose and share their own music.

Davids' latest project, *Requiem for America: Singing for the Invisible People*, is a powerful work that addresses the genocidal foundations of America, amplifying the voices of Indigenous peoples. *Requiem* highlights the history of genocide in each state, contrasting texts from America's founding with historical letters written by Native people, bringing to light the brutal realities of these events.

Dauids' music takes an avant-garde approach, challenging conventional tonal expectations, as well as the idea that Indigenous composers must choose between being stereotypical or forging their own path. His work is a powerful reminder that Indigenous music, like all music, is constantly evolving.

Jerod Tate (Chickasaw)

Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate, a Chickasaw composer and pianist, often uses stories and themes from Chickasaw culture as inspiration for his compositions. His works for orchestra and chamber ensembles frequently incorporate Chickasaw language and mythology, blending these traditional elements with classical music. One of his most well-known recent works, *Lowak Shoppala'* is a multimedia performance that blends music and dance with spoken word to highlight Chickasaw culture and history. Through an orchestral score, narration, children's chorus, and the inclusion of dancers, each scene vividly brings the stories

to life, creating a theatrical experience that immerses the audience in both music and storytelling.

Tate's music offers a counter-narrative to the stereotype that Indigenous music is solely ceremonial or traditional. By combining classical composition techniques with Indigenous stories, he creates music that is both innovative and culturally resonant. Tate's work shows that Indigenous composers can create music that is deeply rooted in their cultural identity while also contributing to the broader classical music tradition.

Dawn Avery (Mohawk)

Dawn Avery is a composer, cellist, and vocalist whose music blends elements of electronica, classical, jazz, and Indigenous traditions. Her album *Our Fire* is a great example of this fusion, blending classical music with Indigenous chants and rhythms to create a sound that is both modern and rooted in tradition.

Piano Magazine Collegiate Writing Contest

The *Piano Magazine* is proud to showcase the ideas of collegiate pianists.

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His [Rider] compositions often incorporate traditional Blackfoot melodies and stories, but he isn't afraid to experiment with different musical forms and technologies.

C. Chee



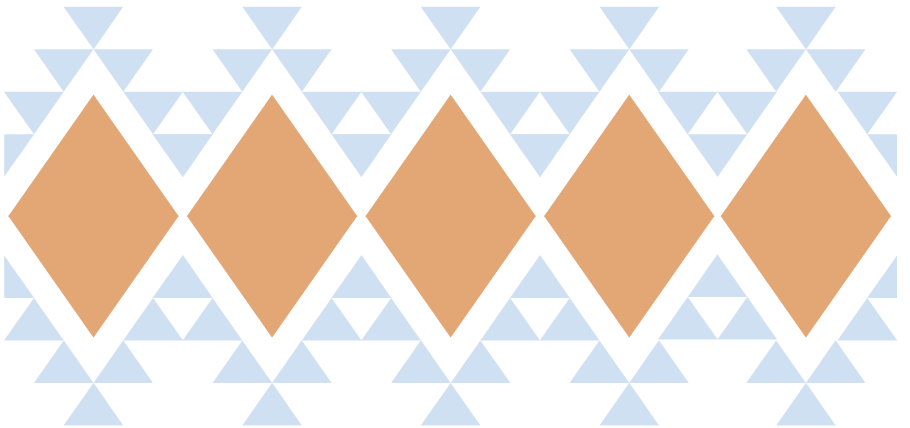
Avery premiered *Sacred World – Onenh'sa* at the University of Michigan in 2023. This new soundscape composed specifically for the carillon, a large, traditional bell instrument is rarely associated with Indigenous music. This innovative work pushes the boundaries of what is typically considered Indigenous music, venturing far beyond traditional sounds and structures.

Avery's music challenges the expectation that Indigenous composers must stick to traditional forms or instruments. She pushes the boundaries of what Indigenous music can be, proving that it is as diverse and innovative as any other musical tradition.

Sonny-Ray Day Rider (Blackfoot)

Sonny-Ray Day Rider is a contemporary Blackfoot composer who creates music that reflects his cultural heritage while embracing a broad musical palate. His compositions often incorporate traditional Blackfoot melodies and stories, but he isn't afraid to experiment with different musical forms and technologies. Day Rider's music demonstrates the flexibility and adaptability of Indigenous composers, who can work across a wide range of musical genres.

Fans of Erik Satie's *Gymnopédies* will likely appreciate *Curious Beast*, a solo piano work that indulges in the French tonalities of that era. Composers like Satie explored harmonic ambiguity, favoring modal scales, whole-tone scales, and extended harmonies over traditional tonal resolution. This approach created a sense of fluidity and openness in their music, often evoking moods of introspection, simplicity, or ethereal beauty. Day Rider's work challenges the stereotype that Indigenous music is isolated from the rest of the world. His music embraces a global sound, proving that Indigenous composers are as much a part of the modern music landscape as anyone else.

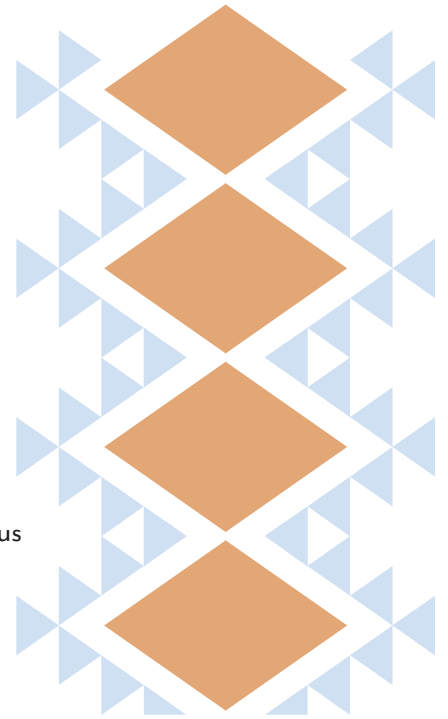


Conclusion:

THE FUTURE OF INDIGENOUS COMPOSITION

The composers featured in this article demonstrate that Indigenous music is far from monolithic. From experimental and avant-garde works to compositions deeply rooted in traditional stories, Indigenous composers are creating music that defies expectations and challenges stereotypes. They are proof that Indigenous music is not confined to one genre, style, or tradition but is as diverse and evolving as any other form of music.

As we continue to listen to and support Indigenous composers, it's important to approach their work with an open mind, free from preconceived notions about what Indigenous music should sound like. By doing so, we can appreciate the incredible diversity and innovation that exists within Indigenous musical traditions today. These composers are not only preserving their cultural heritage but also pushing it forward, ensuring that Indigenous music remains a vital part of the global musical landscape. ▀



CONNOR CHEE is a Diné (Navajo) composer and pianist known for blending classical music with traditional Navajo elements. His award-winning works, featured globally, showcase his cultural heritage and technical mastery. He is also dedicated to music education and cultural preservation, inspiring the next generation of musicians.

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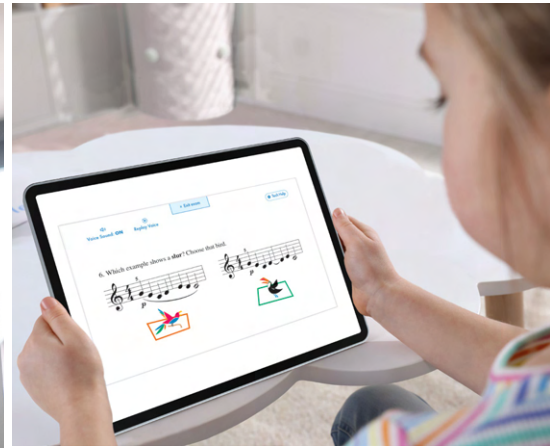
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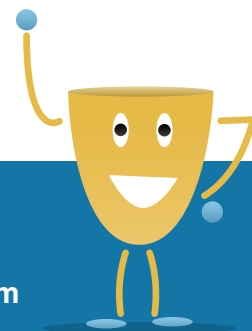
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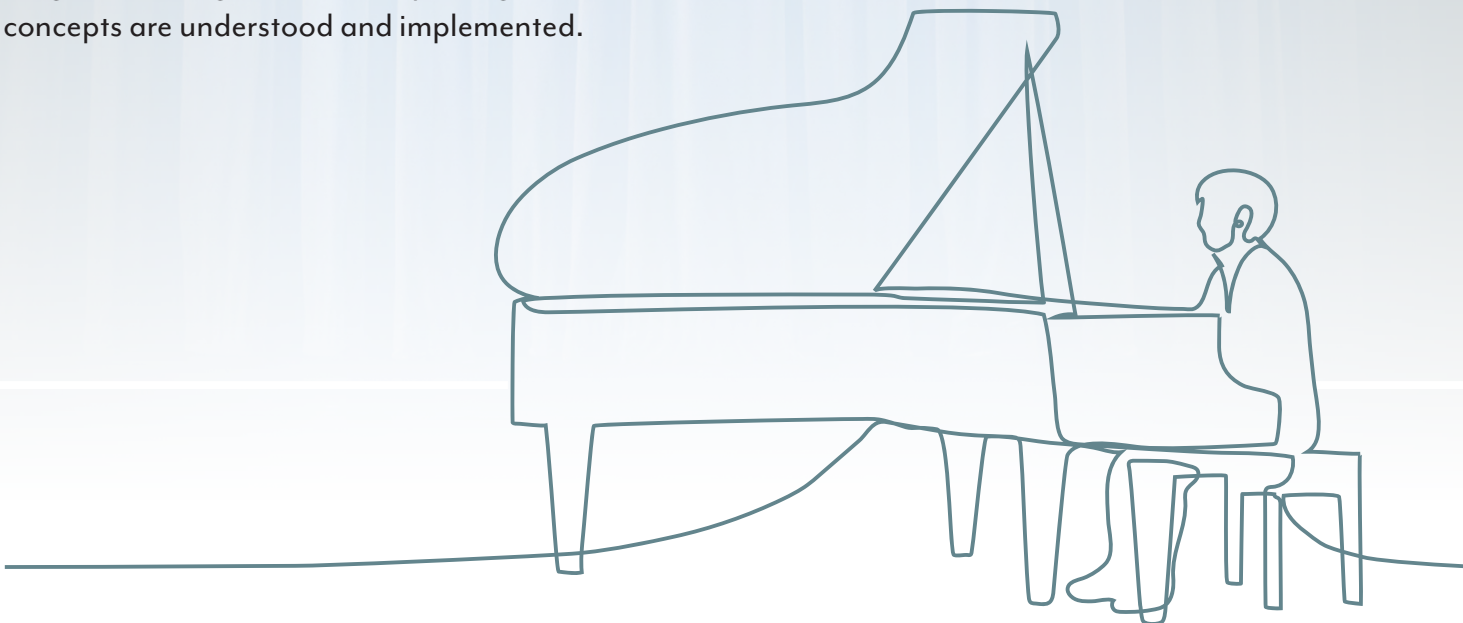
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HELPING STUDENTS DEVELOP THE COURAGE TO COMMAND THE STAGE

BY
THOMAS LANNERS

Developing the courage to perform in an authoritative fashion—one that sets audiences at ease and convinces them that they're listening to musical statements that deserve to be heard—requires perseverance from young musicians. Because psychological elements are involved, the ability to *command the stage* in performance must be charted over a broad timeline for most. Progress can begin immediately though, when certain concepts are understood and implemented.



Basic Tactics to Increase Confidence in Performance for Students of any Age or Level

First, in strictly practical terms, it's important to set up a progression of gradually increasing levels of *pressure* in various performance situations. For younger and less-experienced students, those levels might roughly correspond to this sequence: 1) playing in lessons for their teacher, 2) playing for friends and family members at home, 3) performing one or more pieces in their teacher's periodic group class with peers listening, 4) performing in winter or spring studio recitals, and 5) playing in local festivals or competitions, where they will likely receive written feedback on their work from judges.

With university students, the ascending tiers of performance pressure are similar, though somewhat more extensive: 1) playing in lessons, 2) playing for classmates in each other's practice rooms, 3) playing in a weekly studio class with all piano majors present, 4) performing in a formal afternoon recital hour on which they play one memorized piece, 5) playing an end-of-semester jury that functions as a final exam for their lessons, 6) playing in a competition (depending on the student's abilities and aspirations), 7) performing in a pre-recital hearing examination with all piano faculty members present, and finally 8) performing in a full recital of their own. Naturally, plenty of variance is possible within the basic series charted above, as it is always important to tailor our choices to each individual's needs and aptitudes.

Periodically, encourage students to record themselves in practice sessions. In that setting, the microphone of the recording device becomes, in essence, a surrogate audience. During playback, students listen from the vantage point of a particularly critical audience member, one who knows the piece intimately and can recommend specific and immediate paths to improvement. Then, urge students to record themselves in various performance situations, including those with higher stakes, to understand how adrenaline and an increased heart rate can affect their *tempo*, sound production, sense of timing and *rubato*, etc. No matter how much they may respect the ears and musical acumen of their teacher, there's no substitute for hearing the ups and downs of one's own performance, as the only person who can ultimately bring about progress.

We should help students understand that whatever we do often becomes easier and will be regarded as a common aspect of life. To that end, avoid drawing your students into a pattern of only performing once or twice a year in studio recitals, then dropping those pieces entirely to learn new ones. Instead, help them develop a true *repertoire* by incorporating the occasional practice of previously learned pieces—to keep that music *in their fingers*, so to speak—alongside the primary study of newly assigned works. By doing so, students will always have something to play if called upon by friends or family, by churches or nursing homes, or for payment in various situations. As a byproduct, their trepidation in performing for others may lessen over time, given the increased frequency of their public performing opportunities.

This in turn may enhance that elusive yet vital attribute known as *stage presence*, which has a strong psychological impact on audiences even before the first note is played. We have an obligation to coach students of all ages, in any performance setting, on fundamentals such as bowing before and after playing, walking confidently on and off stage, making eye contact with the audience, and speaking clearly with suitable projection, should they need to announce the title of their piece or share a bit of background information regarding it. In a mysterious way, projecting an air of confidence may gradually transform into a tangible increase in poise and self-assurance.

The Merits of Thorough Preparation

Students must expect mistakes or even minor breakdowns to crop up during initial performances, often in unexpected moments that seemed entirely secure during practice sessions. Taking note of newly revealed weak spots will serve as an essential component of the long-term learning and *solidification* process. An ample amount of efficient practice time must then be spent analyzing precisely why mistakes such as memory slips, technical insecurities, etc., occurred.

This stage offers a golden opportunity to remind students that an extra measure of preparation is necessary to counterbalance the effects of the natural anxiety that may accompany public performance. While we're all aware that one hundred percent is the mathematical maximum in any context, we may borrow an expression from athletes, who claim that they "gave it one-hundred-and-ten percent." I explain that the uneasiness that comes along with playing in front of others, particularly in earlier



stages of development, may undermine some of our quality practice, so the concept of compensating with over-preparation may be useful. In any case, confidence must ultimately be earned in the practice room and onstage, and it cannot be faked. No amount of pedagogical wisdom we impart will mitigate a student's poor or neglectful preparation.

Psychological Elements and Strategies

It helps to remind students that confidence in performance develops over a prolonged period for most young musicians. Because no shortcuts exist, patience is indispensable for both teachers and students during this process.

Encourage students to make *daring mistakes*. Audiences rarely appreciate a cautious approach, and this mindset will heighten students' emotional commitment to passionate musicianship. Obsessive perfectionism, in fact, can be debilitating. It precipitates physical tension, which greatly diminishes fluidity of motion and what we commonly call *technical skills*. From a musical perspective, it squelches creativity and a sense of interpretive improvisation, traits that can distinguish truly profound performances from ordinary ones. It's worth reminding students that, for most audience members, a beautiful, communicative interpretation will outshine one that is "perfect." True perfection is unattainable for human beings, after all, so showcasing the best of our humanity through heartfelt, soulful expression is our loftiest goal.

We should always aim to stay in the moment while performing, not worrying about miscues that occurred earlier or difficult passages to come. This is easier said than done. Most performers, if they're being honest, will admit that their minds wander at least a bit during performances, even having fleeting thoughts about where they parked their car or whether they left the iron on at home. Seasoned musicians, though, gently pull their focus back to the task at hand, concerning themselves only with the notes they're currently playing, and perhaps how those notes relate to the present phrase or section they're immersed in. Performers must avoid the pitfall of *fighting with themselves* while playing, engaging in an angry or frustrated inner conversation that serves no positive purpose. The optimal way to do so is to become more mindful of the thoughts that float through our

consciousness, and to calmly brush aside those that only cause distraction.

A valuable but often-neglected strategy is to practice *performing* while alone at the instrument, closing the eyes and imagining the precise performance situation that lies ahead. Athletes, who face analogous physical challenges to musicians, often utilize this method, visualizing the race they're about to run, the shots they may take in a basketball game, or the acrobatic flips they'll execute on a balance beam. When we visualize carrying out a series of movements, neurons in our brains fire in the same fashion as if we were enacting those motions, but in a safer domain where we can build confidence through entirely successful repetitions.

Keeping Perceived Failures in Proper Perspective

Our egos tend to inflate imperfections well beyond the impressions they make on audience members. We typically know precisely how we intend to play a given piece, or even a phrase or motive, but listeners take what they hear at face value, coming to their own conclusions based on the musical snapshot we present them. What the performer considered a shortcoming may have been perceived altogether differently by audience members, who have the advantage of greater objectivity.

Irrational dread of potential failure is at the root of most performance anxiety, and it must be recognized to be eradicated. While music holds tremendous value to both individuals and society, no lives hang in the balance if we don't play our best in any single performance. There are professions where that is not the case, wherein any blunder can cause serious injury or even loss of life. Yet our minds can convince us, especially given the level of commitment any dedicated musician invests in their studies and practice, that there is a *life and death* situation thrust upon us when we step onto the stage. In truth, if our playing shows our imperfections, the greatest penalty most suffer is to head back to the practice room with a renewed sense of purpose, having discovered our weaknesses in a pressurized setting that should fuel our motivation to improve. Viewed from this perspective, even subpar performances can spur tremendous growth.

Remind students that audiences are rooting for performers to succeed because, among other valid reasons, this will make their listening experience more enjoyable. No doubt we've all felt that uncomfortable sensation when someone onstage has a memory slip, trips over difficult passagework, etc., and the entire audience holds its breath in empathy until the hurdle has been cleared. Young musicians may read the bios of professionals and assume that, unlike them, they have never taken a misstep or experienced struggles of any sort. Naturally, those professionals only chronicle the successes in their careers, omitting any unrealized ambitions or creative misfires. While lists of brilliant accomplishments may lead us to think differently, it's wise to be cognizant that persistence is the ultimate key to a long and successful career in any competitive field.

Commercial recordings also create unrealistic expectations, as the editing process allows for an endless stream of note-perfect renditions. I encourage attendance at as many recitals and concerts as possible to keep students in touch with the realities of live performing, ideally building an appreciation for the unique allure of the unpredictable that may produce truly magical moments.

Conclusion

Most of our students will not become concert performers, nor do they aspire to that goal. If they internalize the processes described above as children or young adults, though, they may exploit these accrued virtues to excel as public speakers, present themselves confidently in job interviews, perform under pressure as the surgeons of tomorrow, and so on. In the final analysis, we teach our students strategies and skills applicable to the entire scope of their lives, not just to music making. This may ultimately be our highest calling. 🎹



THOMAS LANNERS, Oklahoma State University Professor of Piano, is active as a solo and collaborative pianist, recording artist, author, and clinician throughout the US and abroad. He holds graduate degrees from the Eastman School.

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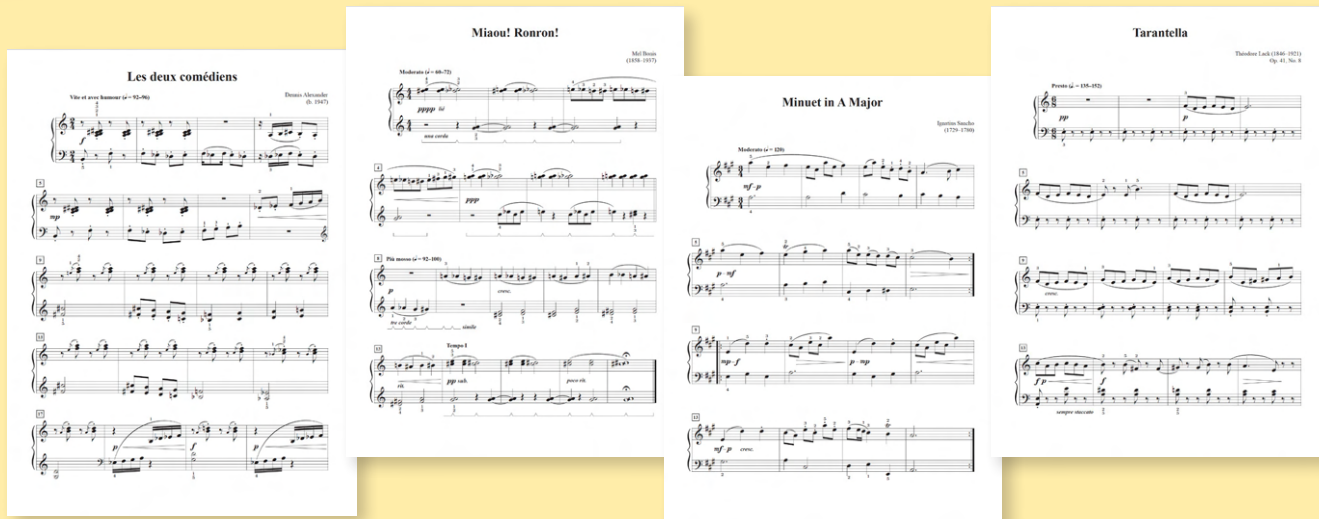
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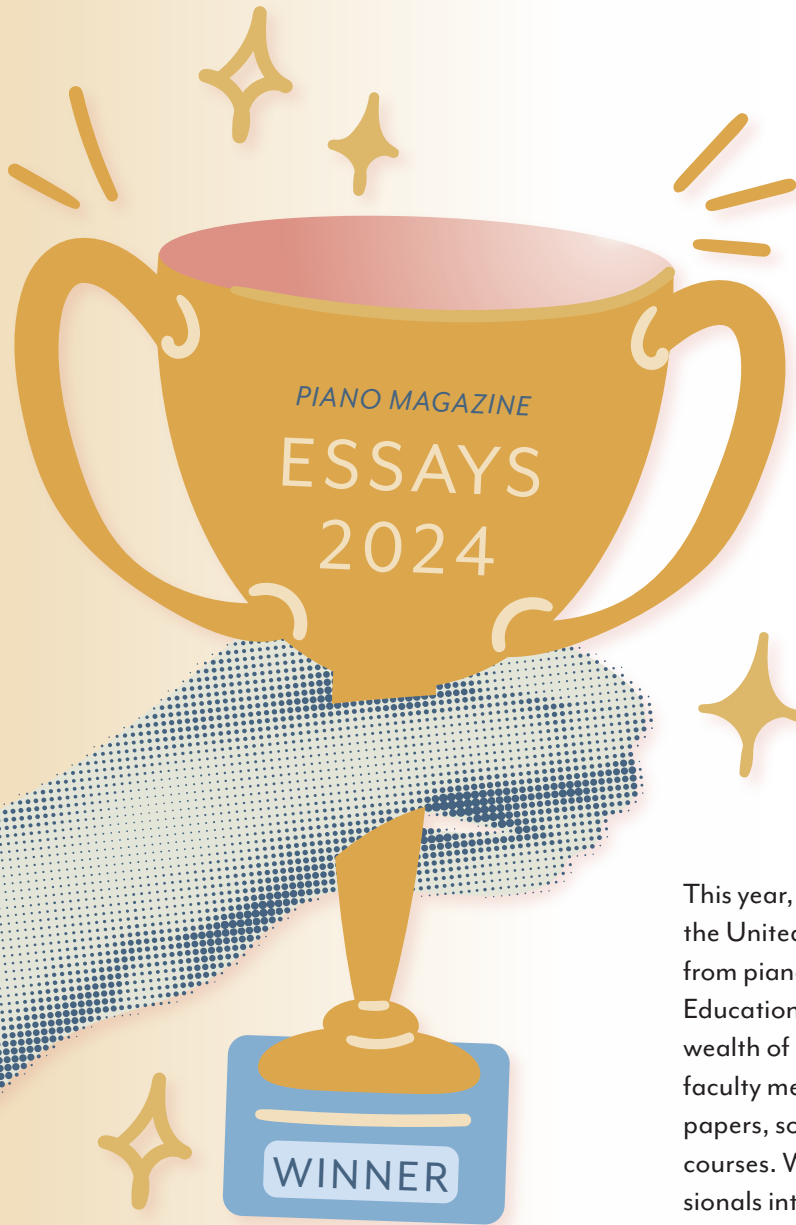
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2024 Collegiate Essay Winners

This year, we had eleven entrants from eight different universities in the United States, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Essays were submitted from piano students from the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Music Education through Doctor of Musical Arts degrees, representing a wealth of pedagogical ideas, experiences, and research. We thank the faculty mentors who encouraged and supervised the writing of these papers, sometimes including them as components of their pedagogy courses. With so many of our collegiate pianists and young professionals interested in pedagogy and teaching, we hope that students and faculty will begin preparing essays for our 2025 writing contest now. Entries are due on May 1, 2025, and complete details are found on our PianoInspires.com website and on page 13 of this issue. Finally, we thank Drs. Andrew Cooperstock, Diana Dumlavwalla, and Sara Ernst (who did not have students entered in the competition this year but have mentored student entrants in the past) for carefully evaluating and judging the essays based on the criteria outlined in our “call for essays.” Based on their recommendation, the editorial team is pleased to print the winning essay and the runner up. Congratulations to our 2024 *Piano Magazine* Collegiate Essay winner, Yu Han, and the runner-up, Eymen Geylan, on their excellent essays.

The Cultural and Practical Implications of Tan Dun's *Eight Memories in Watercolor*

• By Yu Han •

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Blending Musical Traditions

Tan Dun was born in 1957, in Changsha, Hunan Province, China, and earned his master's degree in 1985, from the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. He moved to the United States in 1986, in pursuit of further academic and creative exploration, including doctoral studies at Columbia University in New York. This phase of his education introduced him to many avant-garde techniques and philosophies that would later become hallmarks of his unique compositional voice.

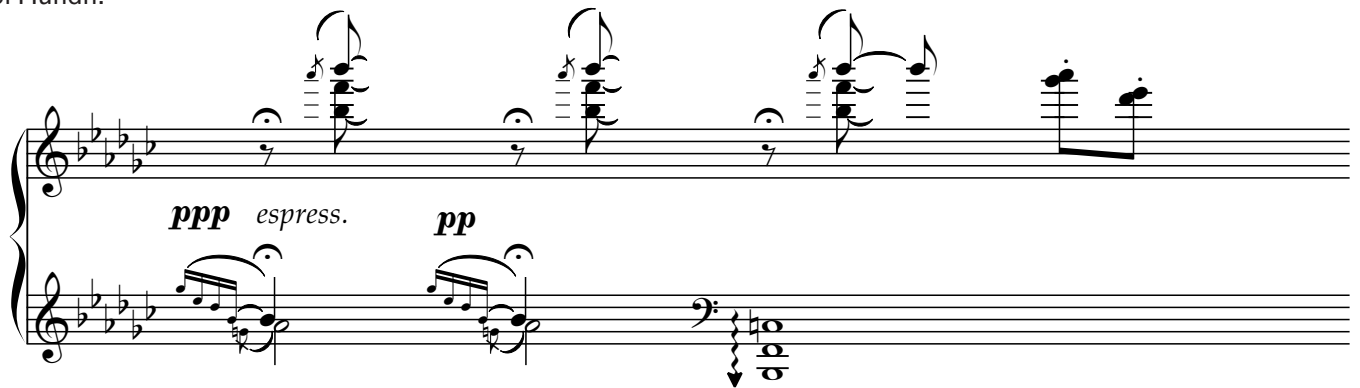
Eight Memories in Watercolor was composed in 1978, during his early years at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. This collection of piano pieces embodies a deeply personal reflection of Tan's own memories and emotions, intertwined with the broader narrative of a nation rediscovering and redefining its cultural identity. The suite presents a bridge between traditional Chinese musical aesthetics and contemporary piano composition techniques; each piece incorporates distinct elements of Chinese folk melodies and idioms but within the framework of Western harmonic language, thereby creating a sound world that resonates with listeners across cultures.

Reflection of Hunanese Roots

Eight Memories in Watercolor serves as a profound musical testament to Tan Dun's deep connection to his Hunanese roots, influenced by cultural and personal nostalgia. The suite not only encapsulates the essence of Tan's early life memories and the rich tapestry of Hunan's cultural heritage, but it also represents his innovative approach to fusing musical traditions. In this way, he spans the temporal divide between the past and the present and offers a unique sonic experience. Each piece evokes a specific memory or sentiment related to Tan Dun's upbringing in Hunan, a region known for its vibrant folk culture and scenic beauty. The musical motifs and themes are imbued with elements of Hunanese folk songs, the sounds of nature, and the emotional depth of childhood memories. For instance, "Herdboy's Song" reflects the pastoral scenes of rural Hunan and incorporates the idiomatic expressions of local folk music to convey a sense of longing and nostalgia. This personal connection to place and memory is further deepened through Tan's use of traditional Chinese musical idioms, such as pentatonic scales and imitative textures that resemble the sounds of Chinese instruments like the *guzheng*¹ and *pipa*.²

Missing Moon

In "Missing Moon," grace notes are used to meticulously mimic the sound of the *guzheng*, a traditional Chinese plucked string instrument, creating an evocative and ethereal texture. This technique necessitates a delicate touch, ensuring the grace notes flow seamlessly into the melody, enhancing rather than interrupting the musical line. A light touch allows for an expressive and nuanced performance, capturing the piece's introspective and contemplative mood. Furthermore, the use of inverted arpeggios contributes to the piece's impressionistic style, reminiscent of the atmospheric and coloristic qualities found in French Impressionist music yet distinctly imbued with the charm of Chu culture.³ This texture requires a fluid and responsive technique, enabling the performer to weave a tapestry of sound that depicts the natural beauty of Hunan.



Excerpt 1. Tan Dun: *Eight Memories in Watercolor*, "Missing Moon," mm. 1.

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Staccato Beans

The playful and energetic character of "Staccato Beans" is brought to life through *staccato* articulations and large leaps. Mastery of these elements is essential to convey the piece's spirited and joyful nature. Precision in *staccato* articulation ensures clarity and crispness, while accurate leaping techniques add dynamism and excitement to the performance. The piece demands a high level of technical control and rhythmic accuracy, challenging the performer to maintain a lively and buoyant atmosphere throughout.

COLLEGIATE ESSAY WINNER

Allegro Scherzando

mp

(the second time faster)

Excerpt 2. Tan Dun: *Eight Memories in Watercolor*, “Staccato Beans,” mm. 1–6.

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Herdboy’s Song

“Herdboy’s Song” portrays Hunan’s lyrical folk style, characterized by flowing arpeggios and ornamental notes that produce a song-like quality. The performer must focus on achieving fluidity in the arpeggios, creating a smooth, continuous sound that supports the melodic line. Ornamental notes should be integrated gracefully into the melody, enhancing the folk character while maintaining the musical flow. The piece requires a sensitive and expressive approach to set a scene of the pastoral beauty of Hunan’s landscape.

(from slow to fast)

f

Excerpt 3. Tan Dun: *Eight Memories in Watercolor*, “Herdboy’s Song,” mm. 7–8.

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Blue Nun

“Blue Nun” requires *cantabile* and nuanced playing to convey a serene and reflective mood. In this piece, achieving a vocal-like quality on the piano involves careful control of dynamics and touch, allowing the melody to soar with clarity and expressiveness. The rapid passagework in this piece challenges the performer to maintain melodic *legato* and phrasing amidst the complexity, demanding a high level of technical proficiency and interpretative insight.

COLLEGIATE ESSAY WINNER

più mosso

mp *cresc.*

Excerpt 4. Tan Dun: Eight Memories in Watercolor, “Blue Nun,” mm. 1–6.

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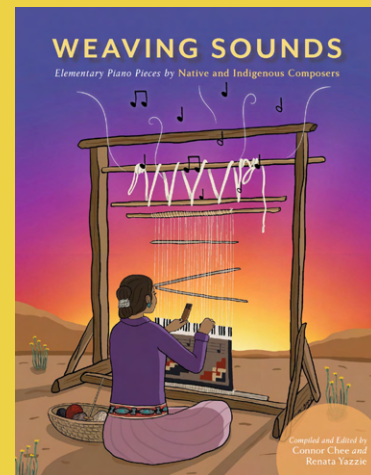
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COLLEGIATE ESSAY WINNER

Red Wilderness

The vast and wild Hunan landscape is portrayed in “Red Wilderness” through the use of trills and syncopation. Trills add a vibrant, shimmering texture to the music, while syncopated rhythms introduce an element of unpredictability and excitement. The performer must navigate these technical challenges with agility and precision, capturing the untamed spirit and natural grandeur of the composer’s native province.

A musical score for piano, showing two staves. The right hand (treble clef) features a melodic line with a trill (tr) and a seven-note slur (7). The left hand (bass clef) provides harmonic support with chords and a dynamic marking of *mf*.

Excerpt 5. Tan Dun: *Eight Memories in Watercolor*, “Red Wilderness,” mm. 10–11.

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Ancient Burial

“Ancient Burial” features a multi-layered texture that requires solemnity and depth of expression to evoke the spiritual essence of Hunan’s ancient burial rituals. The performer must skillfully balance the different voices, ensuring each layer contributes to the overall atmosphere of reverence and mystery. The seriousness of the piece calls for a measured and introspective approach, inviting the listener to reflect on themes of memory, tradition, and the passage of time.

Adagio funebre

A musical score for piano, showing two staves. The right hand (treble clef) has a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *pp*. The left hand (bass clef) has a more complex texture with multiple layers of notes. The tempo/mood is indicated as *Adagio funebre*.

Excerpt 6. Tan Dun: *Eight Memories in Watercolor*, “Ancient Burial,” mm. 1–3.

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COLLEGIATE ESSAY WINNER

Floating Clouds

In “Floating Clouds,” the delicate balance between the melody and the cloud-like arpeggio patterns creates a sense of drifting and ethereal beauty. The melody requires a clear and expressive delivery, while arpeggios must be played with a lightness and fluidity that evoke the image of clouds moving across the sky. Achieving this balance demands a refined touch and meticulous attention to voicing, ensuring that the piece’s dreamlike quality is fully realized.

Andante Semplice

m.s.
p
legato sim.
cresc.
poco a poco
cantabile

Excerpt 7. Tan Dun: *Eight Memories in Watercolor*, “Floating Clouds,” mm. 1–3.

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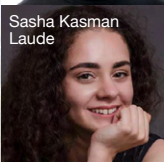
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COLLEGIATE ESSAY WINNER

Sunrain

The vibrant energy and rhythmic vitality of “Sunrain” call for robust chordal and intervallic execution to emulate the lively spirit of communal celebration. The piece features dynamic contrasts and rhythmic drive, requiring the performer to deliver powerful chords and intervals with accuracy and energy. This spirited *finale* challenges the performer to convey the exuberance and joy of a rain dance, bringing the music to life with a sense of vitality and communal spirit.

The musical score for "Sunrain" is presented in a grand staff with two systems. The first system consists of four measures of piano accompaniment, starting with a fortissimo (*fff*) dynamic. The second system consists of six measures, beginning with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The piece is in 2/4 time and features a mix of chords and melodic lines in both hands.

Excerpt 8. Tan Dun: *Eight Memories in Watercolor*, “Sunrain,” mm. 1–6.

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Applications

Eight Memories in Watercolor by Tan Dun spans a range of levels but is primarily suited for late-intermediate to advanced pianists. While some pieces, like “Missing Moon,” might be accessible to ambitious late-intermediate students due to the slower tempo and simpler textures, others, such as “Ancient Burial,” require more advanced technical and expressive abilities. Typically, the suite would be within the grasp of upper-level students or professional pianists looking to explore a fusion of cultural elements in their repertoire. Notably, the suite offers pedagogical value for those developing both technical skills and oriental musical expression. The varied levels of difficulty make it a flexible choice for recitals and examinations at multiple stages of pianistic development.

Eight Memories in Watercolor has become a seminal suite in piano literature, celebrated for its educational value, cultural significance, and emotional richness. It offers performers a multifaceted journey through technical intricacies and expressive depth, intertwining Eastern and Western musical traditions. Tan Dun’s fusion of traditional Chinese musical idioms with modern compositional techniques makes it an attractive choice for pianists who aspire to expand their repertoire and deepen their interpretive skills. 🎹

Notes:

¹ *Guzheng* is a traditional Chinese musical instrument whose history dates back thousands of years. It is a type of zither with twenty-one strings that produces a distinct and melodic sound. For more information, see: Ann L. Silverberg, *A Contemporary History of the Chinese Zheng*, (Hong Kong University Press: 2023).

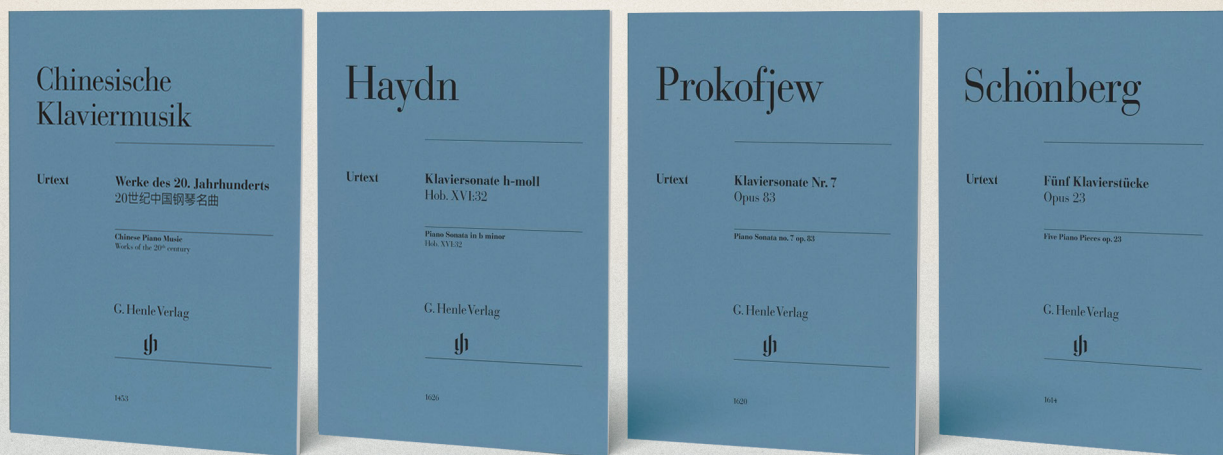
² *Pipa* is a four-stringed Chinese lute that has a long and rich history in Chinese music. The *pipa* is known for its distinctive plucked sound and versatile playing techniques, which include strumming, tremolo, and rapid alternating notes. Find more information: Kenneth Moore, “The Pipa,” *The Met: Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, accessed 19 September 2024, [artistproject.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/pipa/hd_pipa.htm](https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/pipa/hd_pipa.htm).

³ Chu culture, originating in the Eastern Zhou Dynasty, is characterized by a harmonious relationship between humans and nature, sorcery, and artistic innovations. Read more information: Li Feng and Nan Chen, “Characteristics of Chu Culture Reflected in Folk Art of Gan Area,” *Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Social Network, Communication and Education (SNCE 2018): Advances in Computer Science Research 83*, atlantis-pub.com/proceedings/snce-18/25895269.



YU HAN, a University of Arizona doctoral candidate, is a composer, pianist, and multimedia artist whose work spans diverse platforms. Focusing on interdisciplinary projects, her compositions involve collaborations with musicians, dancers, visual artists, and engineers.

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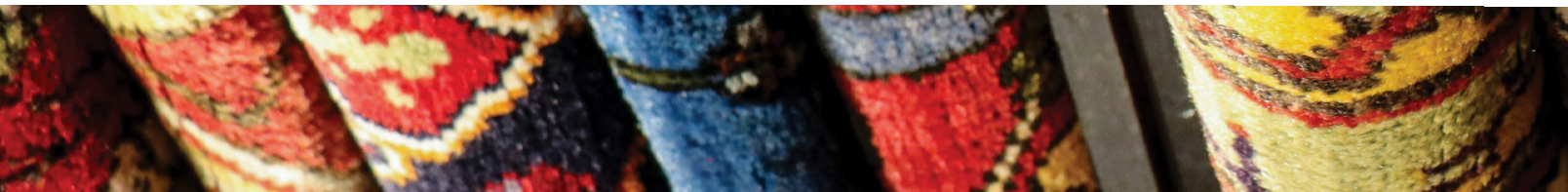
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EAST MEETS WEST:

The Development of Turkish Music

by Eymen Geylan

Brief History ~

The Republic of Turkey, as it is known today, is a relatively young country having celebrated its centennial in 2023. Turkey's musical history has significant ties to the establishment of the republic which took place during a time that saw changes in musical trends of the late-Romantic period and early-twentieth century. In the early 1900s, the Ottoman Empire began to deteriorate, contending with many debts, loss of land, and power. A group of young military officers, including the legendary figure, Mustafa Kemal Pasha, envisioned a new republic. Pasha, later known as Atatürk, started the Turkish War of Independence in 1919. After four years of war, which saw many struggles and a ruined empire, Pasha, his team, and citizens scored a historical victory in the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923.¹

Along with new borders, Atatürk envisioned a revolutionized Turkey with globalized and modern art, culture, and innovation. Atatürk was a fan of Western opera, especially those by Wagner, as well as traditional Turkish music. He believed Turkish music should spread throughout the world; however, the complexities of Turkish tonality and traditional instruments made this difficult. To help facilitate the advancement of Turkish music, Atatürk and the Turkish government provided young and talented musicians with scholarships to study harmony, counterpoint, and composition in Europe. Cemal Resit Rey, Hasan Ferit Alnar, Ahmed Adnan Saygun, Ulvi Cemal Erkin, Necil Kazim Akses, along with other musicians studied in different European cities. They studied with famous teachers including Nadia Boulanger, Vincent D'Indy, and Marguerite Long.

COLLEGIATE RUNNER UP



Rey, Alnar, Saygun, Erkin, and Akses became known as the Turkish Five, due to the great amount of music they produced after returning to Turkey from their Western studies. Part of Atatürk's musical and education reform included the establishment of conservatories with the goal of teaching music to future generations. In 1935, he invited Hungarian composer Béla Bartók to Turkey where he conducted research with Saygun and Akses, discovering ninety-eight folk tunes, six of which were similar to Hungarian folk tunes. German composer Paul Hindemith was also invited to Turkey the same year to observe the development of music in Turkey. He wrote "Turkish Folk Music from Asia Minor," a 200-page report about Turkey and the state of music education. Hindemith helped to establish the first music conservatory focused on Western music education in Ankara, Turkey. Eventually, the Turkish Five taught at these new conservatories established in Turkey.²

Turkish Tonality, Makams, and Aksak ~

Microtonality is a distinct tonal element of Turkish art music. The tonal system includes whole tones, semitones, and quartertones. In Turkish music, pitches are diminished or augmented by unequal intervals which causes unusual intonation. Therefore, Turkish music might sound out-of-tune to those who have primarily been exposed to Western music. *Makams*, another element of Turkish music, are scales created by tetrachords and pentachords. There are hundreds of *makams* in Turkish music. Two different *makams* can be combined to create another *makam*, and some *makams* appear in Western music such as major and natural minor scales.³

Example 1. Makams.

Çârgah Karcigar Buselik

4
Hüseyini Hicâz Uşşak

The *aksak*, meaning "to limp," is an element of Turkish music related to meter. Several Turkish folk songs and compositions written by the Turkish Five include *aksak* meters, which have irregular beat patterns. One example is 9/8 with subdivisions of 2+2+2+3 instead of 3+3+3.

The following discussion will include examples of intermediate to advanced literature written by the Turkish Five that highlight these elements of Turkish music. Technical and musical challenges will also be discussed.

COLLEGIATE RUNNER UP

Intermediate Repertoire ~

Ahmed Adnan Saygun's *Inci's Book*, Op. 10, written in 1934, is suitable for intermediate-level students. The first piece highlights the Western influence Saygun was exposed to during his studies in Paris. Written in A minor, this sentimental piece has impressionistic features of a dreamy mood and floating melodies. The lack of accidentals eases the reading for students. The focus on color, fluidity, and atmosphere will require students to control a variety of touches, balance, and voicing. The left hand has a continuous accompanimental figure with a secondary melody against the primary melody in the right hand. As the left hand is written in the treble clef, the hands play close together, and this may pose a technical challenge. This piece is a suitable option for students before playing their first works by Debussy or Ravel.

Example 2. Ahmed Adnan Saygun, *Inci's Book*, Op. 10, No. 1, mm. 1–14.

Calme (♩ = cca. 106)

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Sensations (1937) by Ulvi Cemal Erkin is a set of pieces well-known by pianists in Turkey. Each piece has a descriptive title such as “Lullaby,” “River,” and “March.” “A Little Shepherd,” the second piece in the set, shares a similar title and soundscape with Debussy’s “The Little Shepherd” in his *Children’s Corner*. The piece sounds easy to play, but upon examination of the score, several challenges present themselves. First, the piece lacks a time signature and bar lines, creating an improvisatory feel. The *ostinato* F-sharp quarter note in the left hand maintains the pulse of the piece. Challenging rhythms in the right hand include tied notes, dotted rhythms, and 64th notes, requiring careful counting by the student. The *Cârgah makam* gives this piece a folk-like quality.

COLLEGIATE RUNNER UP

Example 3.
Ulvi Cemal Erkin,
Sensations,
No. 2, "A Little Shepherd,"
beats 1–19.

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Andante

mf *espress.* *simile*

pp

2

3

3

3

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COLLEGIATE RUNNER UP

Late-Intermediate Repertoire ~

Adnan Saygun's *From Anatolia*, Op. 21, No. 1, "Meseli" is a popular piece among piano students in Turkey and is a great way to introduce Turkish music to students everywhere. Written in 9/8, it features an irregular beat pattern of 2+2+2+3. Despite this rhythmic challenge, the pattern is consistent throughout the piece and will develop a students' rhythmic skill. "Meseli" is written in A minor but a few *makams* are implied. The *Hüseyni makam* is used in the opening melody which has an F-sharp rather than a G-sharp, which would be found in an A harmonic minor scale. Later, in measure 8, the melody in the right hand has an E-flat and F-sharp consecutively, and the left hand has these notes written as a harmonic interval on the seventh beat. This is the *Karcigar makam*.

Example 4: Ahmed Adnan Saygun, *From Anatolia*, Op. 21, No. 1, "Meseli," mm. 1–3 and 7–10.

Allegramente (♩ = 126)

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Hasan Ferit Alnar's *Eight Piano Pieces* is a set with different types of pieces. The fifth piece, "Let's Move It," is a fun piece with a dance-like character written in 7/8. There are many reading challenges in the piece, including several accidentals, clef changes, and inconsistent chords. The tonal center of the piece is A, and the *Hicâz makam*, which includes B-flat and C-sharp, is used. Despite these challenges, students will enjoy learning this piece.

Example 5: Hasan Ferit Alnar, *Eight Piano Pieces*, No. 5, mm. 1–17.

L'istesso tempo **Allegro, un poco agitato**

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 1-6) begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a half note. The second system (measures 7-12) begins with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic and a half note. The third system (measures 13-17) begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and a half note. The score includes various dynamics (*f*, *pp*, *mf*, *p*, *cresc.*), articulations (accents, slurs), and clef changes (treble and bass clefs).

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Early-Advanced Repertoire ~

Cemal Resit Rey's *10 Turkish Folk Songs* is an early-advanced set of pieces. Students will enjoy the eighth piece of the set which features dance-like melodies that are fun to play. Interestingly, the time signature is 10/8 and features an irregular beat pattern of 3+4+3. Technical challenges include left-hand octave leaps, chords, and mixed articulations such as two-note slurs, *staccato*, and *tenuto* markings. Many octaves and dense chords with accidentals are a challenge for the right hand. These challenges are prominent when combined with a fast tempo and *fortissimo* dynamics.

COLLEGIATE RUNNER UP

Example 6: Cemal Resit Rey, *10 Turkish Folk Songs*, No. 8, mm. 1–2.

Allegro con fuoco (♩ = 58)

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Miniatures by Necil Kazim Akses includes ten short pieces in a variety of time signatures with irregular beat patterns. The fourth piece is worth noting due to the fugue-like structure, which was not a common compositional technique used by the Turkish Five. Despite the consistent beat, counting will pose a challenge to students given the 8/8 time signature which is divided 3+2+3. It uses *Hicâz* and *Buselik makams*. Reading challenges include several accidentals, and from a technical view, students may struggle to project the main motive against accented notes in the other hand. This work can be an effective selection for competitions and recitals.

Example 7: Necil Kazim Akses, *Miniatures*, No. 4, mm. 1–8.

Allegro moderato

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COLLEGIATE RUNNER UP

Advanced Repertoire ~

Saygun's *10 Etudes on Aksak Rhythms*, inspired by Chopin's etudes, are advanced works. Each etude has different technical and rhythmic challenges, most with irregular beat patterns. The first etude, a favorite among pianists, is written in 7/8 with both 4+3 and 2+3+2 beat groupings. This irregular rhythm combined with repeated notes, *glissandi*, chord clusters, and full use of the keyboard range pose several challenges. Saygun used folk melodies in this piece, combined with the 7/8 time signature, to create a modern quality.

Example 8: Ahmed Adnan Saygun, *10 Etudes on Aksak Rhythms*, No. 1, mm. 21–35.

The musical score consists of three systems of piano notation. The first system is in treble and bass clefs, starting with a forte (*ff*) dynamic and an *8va* marking. The second system is in bass clef, featuring a fortissimo (*fff*) dynamic and a *gliss.* marking. The third system is in bass clef, showing various *8va* and *8ub* markings. The score includes complex rhythmic patterns, repeated notes, and chord clusters.

Ten Etudes on Aksak Rhythms, Op. 38 by A. Adnan Saygun © Copyright 1969 by Southern Music Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Reprinted by Permission.

COLLEGIATE RUNNER UP

“Many (of these pieces) are flashy or dance-like, which make for great recital closers that students and audiences will enjoy.”

Conclusion ~

These pieces exemplify a lesser-known body of work in the piano world and are great for teachers, students, and performers looking for unusual repertoire for recitals, recordings, and other projects. These pieces can act as substitutes for other twentieth-century works and can introduce pianists and audiences to music by the Turkish Five and to Turkish compositional elements such as *makams* and *aksaks*. Many are flashy or dance-like, which make for great recital closers that students and audiences will enjoy. ■



EYMEN GEYLAN was born in Izmir, Turkiye. She moved to the United States in 2016, and received bachelor and master's degrees in music performance from the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Notes

¹Ipek Brooks, “Selected Twentieth-Century Turkish Character Pieces for Solo Piano” (PhD diss., University of Georgia, 2015), 1–9. Accessed January 12, 2024. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

²Elif Sayin, “Musical Language of Turkish Five, Traditional Turkish Music, and Its Interaction with Folkloric Music” (master's thesis, Dokuz Eylül University Fine Arts Institute, Music Department, Izmir, 2015), 1–30.

³Karl L. Signell, *Makam: Modal Practice in Turkish Art Music* (Seattle: Asian Music Publications, 1977), 34–35.

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EXERCISING

IN THE NAME OF MUSIC

by Margarita Denenburg

A vital component of successful piano teaching is guiding students to develop a comfortable approach to the instrument and achieve a beautiful tone. Essential to this process is cultivating a technique that is well-balanced and free from tension. Key to this development is helping students internalize the sensations associated with both tense and relaxed states in various body parts, along with understanding their movements. By engaging in targeted exercises, students can first become aware of these sensations and then apply them effectively to their playing.

One of the sources for such exercises is the renowned Soviet pedagogue Anna Artobolevskaya (1905–1988). In her method book *First Meeting with Music*, Artobolevskaya introduces several exercises to be performed away from the piano, as well as while seated at the instrument. These exercises laid the groundwork for many subsequent pedagogues, who further developed and created additional exercises. Artobolevskaya's initial exercises include three warm-up activities designed for students to perform before sitting at the piano.¹ Exercises away from the piano help students understand what being “relaxed” truly feels like. They enable students to experience the concept of arm weight and learn how their arms should move.

EXERCISES AWAY FROM THE PIANO:

1. Arm Swing Exercise:

Stand upright with your hands hanging freely. Slowly bend forward, allowing your arms to swing towards and away from each other. Once your body reaches a position close to ninety degrees, begin to straighten up while continuing to swing your arms. (Video 1)²



2. Hand and Torso Relaxation:

Raise your hands upwards while relaxing your back muscles to feel a sense of openness. Then, let your hands and upper torso drop downwards, aiming for complete freedom of movement. (Video 2)



3. Arm Swing with Momentum:

Stand straight with your feet shoulder-width apart. Begin swinging one hand back and forth, gradually gaining momentum until the swing completes a full circle, similar to the motion of a fan or windmill. Repeat the same motion with the other hand.

While the above exercises focus on arm weight awareness, the next set by Artobolevskaya centers around hand shaping and finger positioning.

EXERCISES AT THE PIANO:

1. Round Bun or Rolling Bun:

The student places a relaxed hand on the keyboard. The teacher then positions one hand under the student's wrist and the other over it, gently rolling the hand in and out to demonstrate the feeling of arm weight and natural hand movement. (Video 3)



2. Ball:

The student places their hand lightly over a rubber ball, allowing the fingers to hang loosely. The goal is to create a "chapel" arch in the hand, where the knuckles form a gentle curve.

3. Kissing Pencil:

Using a pencil with an eraser on one end, the teacher places the pencil gently under each fingertip. While holding the student's hand, the teacher allows the pencil to gently push each fingertip upwards.

Several contemporary pedagogues have built on these foundational exercises, introducing innovative and imaginative activities. Although these pedagogues often target younger students, their exercises are also effective for older learners. For example, Irina Gorin's method book, *Tales of a Musical Journey*, offers a range of exercises aimed at increasing body awareness. Notable examples include "The Weeping Willow Tree," "Resting a Pencil on the Piano Keys," "Jelly Keys," and the "Rubber Band Exercise."³ Many of these exercises are also demonstrated in free YouTube videos on Gorin's channel, "Tales of a Musical Journey."⁴

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Another recently published resource is *Unleashing the Potential of the Musician's Body* by Tina Margareta Nilssen, published in 2021.⁵ Nilssen is a prominent musician and educator who developed the Timani method. Her method focuses on the connection between physical awareness and musical expression. It emphasizes body awareness, movement, and the physiological aspect of playing an instrument. This comprehensive book is an excellent resource for professional musicians, offering a wealth of exercises and insights into bodily functionality. Nilssen covers various topics in detail, including “Warm-ups, Practice, Exercise, and Rest,” “Pain, Injury, and Self-Care,” “Understanding the Anatomy of Movement,” and “The Brain and Muscles.” The exercises in the book are accompanied by illustrations and step-by-step instructions.

Exercises can be introduced to musicians at any stage of their studies, offering opportunities for growth and a deeper understanding of how our bodies function. In this article, I've highlighted a few exercises and provided resources for further exploration. By taking the first step and trying these exercises, musicians can unlock a world of possibilities and gain greater appreciation for their physical mechanics. Each exercise should be approached with two key considerations:

first, the specific goal of the exercise; and second, the awareness that every movement triggers a chain reaction. Ideally, this chain reaction will lead to a beautiful tone and pain-free playing. 🎹



DR. MARGARITA DENENBURG is an Associate Professor of Practice in Piano Pedagogy at The University of Texas at Austin. For more information, please visit: margarita-denenburg.com

NOTES

- ¹ Anna Artobolevskaya, *First Meeting with Music* (Moscow: Soviet Composers, 1986).
- ² Please visit pianoinspires.com/video/exercising-in-the-name-of-music/ to see the video demonstrations of the three exercises explained in this article.
- ³ Irina Gorin, *Tales of a Musical Journey* (self-published, Irina Gorin, 2022).
- ⁴ Irina Gorin, “Tales of a Musical Journey,” YouTube channel, October 2, 2024. youtube.com/@TalesofaMusicalJourney.
- ⁵ Margareta Tina Nilssen, *Unleashing the Potential of the Musician's Body* (Oslo: Norsk Musikforlag A/S, 2021).

2025 MTNA National Conference

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The 2025 MTNA National Conference, March 15–19 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, will bring together the most representative cross-section of the MTNA membership. Michelle Cann and the first-prize winner of the National Chopin Piano Competition will highlight the evening recitals. Composer Libby Larsen will provide the keynote address. Pedagogy Saturday boasts five tracks: Artistry; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Musician Wellness; Recreational Music Making; and Young Professionals. As always, the national competitions will feature the outstanding performances of students in all instrument areas as well as composition. And perennial favorites like the exhibit hall, poster sessions and showcases will all be a part of the conference experience.

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by Jennifer Snow



The new year of 2025 signals the end of the first quarter of the twenty-first century. This time marker is a reminder that most collegiate students and young professionals were born during this first quarter and their perspectives will define the future of our profession. These next generations of leaders face change at an unparalleled scale and speed. Dedicated to a sustainable future, our profession must imagine and support new economic models, promote the value and relevance of our work, and adapt to dramatic shifts in global human rights, education, environment, economy, and technology.

With this issue of *Piano Magazine*, we amplify the excellence of collegiate writers and their scholarship. Young professionals bring innovation, collaborative energy, and a deep passion for social impact through their work. Their dedication to piano education and transformative change is inspiring and essential. Critical at this time is a deep conviction that music making is core to being human. As educators, we find ourselves positioned to advocate passionately and tirelessly for the importance of personal creative development, social connection in times of expanding isolation, and human-to-human connection as essential for shared experience and social cohesion.

Recently, **The Piano Conference: NCKP2025** call for proposals yielded a record-breaking number of submissions, including an extraordinary number of submissions by students. This commitment to advancing the profession through shared practice underscores the power of our gathering this summer. Together, we will frame the most pressing issues in our field with the new Innovative Summit on the future. We will identify big questions, challenges, and innovative new ideas. This exchange of knowledge, creativity, and shared advocacy for the power of the work we do, will reflect a shared vision for a sustainable future. With the launch of our new **Community Impact Grants**, we will partner with our community to help fund initiatives that focus on meaningful change through piano education.

More than ever, new graduates are facing unprecedented opportunities and challenges. We need to listen, support, and collaborate actively with them as we navigate change together. Through their vision for the future, quest for a more inclusive culture, and motivation for measurable impact,

new professionals will lead one of the most exciting periods for our field.

With the beginning of the next quarter of this century upon us, it is crucial to actively envision a sustainable and vibrant future. It is one of the most exciting times to be a musician. The profound desire for human connection and cultivation of personal human expression has never been more needed. At the Center, we continue to engage the community, explore how we can best support it, and advocate relentlessly for the transformative work of music making and our outstanding community that leads this work every day. As we strengthen our community through collaboration, we are called to be flexible, adaptive, and open. The new generation of musicians, educators, researchers, scholars, and leaders demonstrates an expansive vision for piano education that is invigorating, hopeful, and transformative for all of us. 📖

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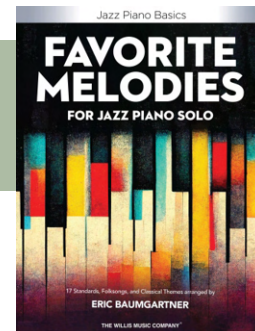
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“GREENSLEEVES”

Exploring Jazz through a Timeless Classic!

by Desireé González-Miller



The timeless melody of *Greensleeves* has echoed through centuries, captivating listeners with its haunting beauty and rich history. While traditionally associated with the Renaissance era, this beloved folk tune has found a new life in a vibrant jazz arrangement. This reimagined version not only breathes fresh air into the piece but also offers piano students an opportunity to delve into the world of jazz. Baumgartner’s arrangement of “Greensleeves” provides an excellent introduction to jazz for students, particularly those transitioning from classical to jazz piano. This piece, while rooted in the familiar, opens the door to exploring syncopation, swing rhythm, improvisation, and jazz harmonies—elements that are typical of the genre.

Syncopation is a defining feature of jazz music, adding an element of surprise and rhythmic complexity. In this arrangement, the syncopated rhythms introduced in the first few measures set the tone for the entire piece (mm. 1–4). For students, mastering these off-beat accents not only helps to improve their overall rhythmic precision but can also bring a new level of excitement and energy to their playing.

EXCERPT 1 Eric Baumgartner, “Greensleeves” mm. 1–4

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One of the most delightful aspects is the “Bright Jazz Waltz” feel that is indicated on the score, seamlessly blending the old with the new. The swing rhythm from the very beginning challenges students to develop a sense of groove and momentum that is crucial in jazz music. This rhythmic twist on a classic tune not only keeps the piece engaging but also helps students internalize the swing feel, an essential component of jazz performance.

Jazz pianists often juggle independent lines in each hand, a skill that requires both technical precision and musical intuition. For instance, in measures 9–12, students encounter a regular melodic line in the right hand, while the left hand navigates an off-beat accompaniment. This exercise in hand independence not only strengthens coordination but also lays the foundation for more advanced jazz techniques, such as walking bass lines and stride patterns.

EXCERPT 2 Eric Baumgartner, “Greensleeves” mm. 9–12

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At the heart of jazz lies improvisation—a creative process that allows pianists to express their personal voice within the music. Baumgartner thoughtfully includes an improvisatory passage in measures 72–79, providing students with a structured

FROM *Favorite Melodies for Jazz Piano Solo: 17 Standards, Folksongs, and Classical Themes* arranged by Eric Baumgartner

introduction to this core element of jazz. Although the passage is written out, it encourages students to explore different rhythms and techniques, gradually building their confidence to improvise freely.

EXCERPT 3 Eric Baumgartner, “Greensleeves” mm. 72–79

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One of the most intriguing aspects of jazz is its rich harmonic language, characterized by the extensive use of extended chords. Throughout this arrangement, students are introduced to seventh chords which add depth and color to the music. By becoming comfortable with these jazz chords, students not only enhance their harmonic vocabulary but also prepare themselves for more complex chords, such as 9ths, 11ths, and 13ths, in future pieces.

While the piece offers a wealth of educational benefits, it's important to note that it is most suited for intermediate to early-advanced level students. The technical demands, particularly the hand span required for seventh chords, make it an ideal choice for students who are ready to challenge themselves and take their playing to the next level. This arrangement of *Greensleeves* is more than just a holiday favorite—it's a comprehensive educational tool that bridges the gap between classical and jazz piano. By studying this piece, students not only expand their musical horizons but also gain a deeper appreciation for the dynamic, expressive nature of jazz. Whether performed in a studio setting or at a holiday recital, this crowd-pleasing arrangement is sure to captivate audiences and inspire budding jazz pianists. 🎹



DESIREÉ GONZÁLEZ-MILLER is an award-winning Mexican pianist and pedagogue. She is Director of the University of Utah Piano Outreach Program and a frequent presenter at national and international music conferences where she advocates for Latin American piano repertoire.

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FRIENDS AT LAST: Tuneful Rote Pieces for the Beginning Pianist

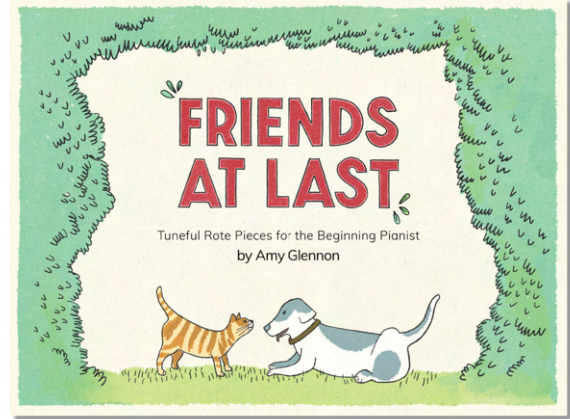
by Amy Glennon

Meet Joey, his dog Kismet, and his cat Tabitha (Tabby for short)—the stars of Amy Glennon’s charming musical story, perfectly suited for a studio recital of beginner pianists, complete with opportunities for improvisation, fun piano-based sound effects, and a great lesson about friendship and community.

These pieces are intended to be taught by rote as accompaniments to story scenes about a day in the life of Joey, Kismet, and Tabby. A series of whimsical and wistful motifs help to seamlessly connect each story while also cleverly disguising the pedagogical exercises underpinning the individual pieces. “Dreaming,” the first piece in the set, begins with a four-measure phrase on the black keys followed by the same phrase transposed to a new hand position on the white keys. For beginner students, this hand position shift may require time for adjustment, but by including a story break in between the two positions, students have adequate time to adjust in a relaxed, intentional, and narratively important way.

There are two versions of “Oh, I’d Like to Take a Walk,” marked by two important changes: the first version is a leisurely setting accompanied by images of flowers, excellently illustrated by Elisa Lara Campos, in G-flat major; the second setting is boldly marked “ALLEGRO” to match Kismet the dog’s energetic insistence and is in the key of G major. This repetition serves as an introduction to tempo and hand position changes but can also be used as an introduction to the loftier concept of transposition.

Selections in the collection exclusively use the second, third, and fourth fingers of each hand, omitting the thumb and fifth finger entirely. While this feature may limit the musicality, the use of hand positions, harmony, improvisation, and storytelling provide a variety that is much needed in beginner repertoire.



Each piece in the set also includes the teacher accompaniment to help set the mood and establish tempo for the students. The set is also suited for a complete performance (with narrator) at a recital or library story hour. As recital pieces, I believe there would be great value in assigning the relatively easy teacher accompaniments to an older student within the studio or even studio parents wishing to learn alongside their children, building a strong, musical community and fully embracing the convivial spirit of the collection. (Piano Safari, \$12.95) — Matt A. Mason

“A series of whimsical and wistful motifs help to seamlessly connect each story while also cleverly disguising the pedagogical exercises underpinning the individual pieces.”



MATT A. MASON is a passionate educator, an active composer, and pianist currently serving on the faculty at Roosevelt University in Chicago, Illinois. He holds a PhD from the University of Iowa.

MY BEST PERFORMANCE: Piano Solos

by Melody Bober

Hang on to your hats, folks—you are in for a real treat! This is a wonderful collection of ten pieces for students at the early-elementary level. Written in traditional notation, they all include teacher duets with varied musical styles and include the use of major, minor, and pentatonic sounds.

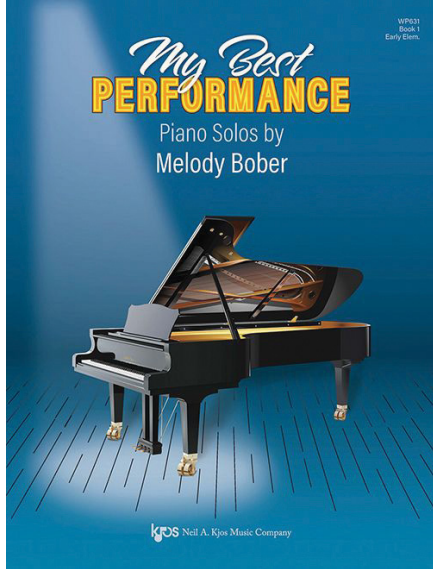
Melodies in these works are predominantly single line, with the addition of dyads to add excitement and fullness of sound. Rhythms are simple and intuitive; included in one work is a quarter-half note-quarter syncopation, but there are no eighth notes within the solo parts and all rhythms are appropriate for beginners. Dynamic markings are written to both provide variety and musical intent, and to be easily accomplished by the beginning student. Slurs and *staccatos* also help depict the characters of the pieces but fit comfortably in the hand and in the melodic line.

Students learning these pieces will express a variety of moods. “Bird Song” and “Kiku Garden” are lovely and serene, while “Sly Fox” is sneaky and “Wild Gallop” takes the player and listener on an exciting ride. The teacher duets are composed to support the student soloist, while enhancing the emotions portrayed in the music.

Many beginning pianists are uncomfortable placing both thumbs on a single note—often middle C. Carefully avoiding this placement, most of the pieces are written with the left-hand thumb on B \flat and the right-hand thumb on C4. Performers are still able to play sweeping melodies between the two hands, while remaining physically comfortable.

Students love to play pieces which use showy piano tricks like hand crossings, and this technique is included in several pieces. Crossings are carefully timed to be easy to accomplish and to highlight endings and high points in phrases. Performers even get to play a *glissando* to complete the last piece, “Dolphin Dance!”

Teachers and beginning pianists will enjoy this new set of works. There are two other books in this series: one for mid-elementary students and one for late-elementary/early intermediate performers. (Kjos, \$6.99) — *Meg Gray*



MEG GRAY is on the faculty at Wichita State University where she teaches piano pedagogy and coordinates the undergraduate class piano program. She also maintains a precollege studio and is an active adjudicator and presenter.

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CHRISTMAS STANDARDS: 15 Elegant Arrangements

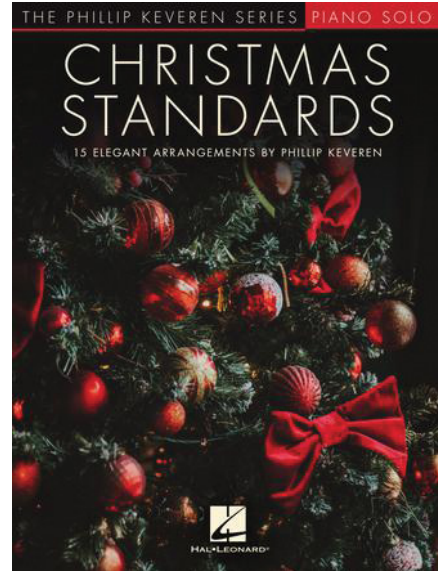
arranged by Phillip Keveren

Are you looking for fresh settings of Christmas standards to play for a holiday party? Interested in teaching something besides the perennial “Jingle Bells” this year? This set of fifteen Christmas arrangements may be your answer!

The collection features iconic holiday tunes from the 1930s to 1980s; one can easily imagine Bing Crosby or Frank Sinatra crooning in the background while thumbing through these songs. Standard tunes such as “The Christmas Song” and “It’s Beginning to Look Like Christmas” are guaranteed to please audiences of all ages, while this publication also introduces several lesser-known songs, such as “Let’s Have an Old-Fashioned Christmas” and “What Are You Doing New Year’s Eve?”

The use of the whole-tone scale in “I’ll Be Home for Christmas” adds a fresh twist to this classic song, and the jazz-oriented harmonies of “The Christmas Song” provide the harmonic richness for the tune. In “Silver Bells,” a simple fourths pattern in the upper register imitates ringing bells, creating a technically accessible version of chimes that even young pianists can manage. While there are occasional moments of dense texture in these arrangements, the melody is commonly written in single-note lines, occasionally harmonized in keyboard style. The left-hand accompaniments typically use simple chordal or arpeggiated patterns, well-written to capture the instrument’s resonance. Key signatures favor C, G, and F major and never stray beyond three accidentals.

These versatile arrangements are appropriate for the intermediate to late-intermediate level student and are sure to spice up holiday lessons with plenty of Christmas cheer. For advanced students, the collection offers sightreadable material that is perfectly suited to be easy-listening background music at holiday parties or gigs. None of the arrangements have significant technical challenges, and as a rule, the music avoids overt virtuosic display. Octaves within one hand are rare, and only once in “The Christmas Song” does a chord span a ninth, making this collection an excellent choice for those with smaller hands.



Arrangements average two to three pages each, usually with a partial repeat or *da capo*. The engraving is clear, large, and easy-to-read. Fingering is sparse, leaving most of these decisions to the pianist, and no pedaling is notated.

During the busy holiday season, piano teachers often neglect to take time to create music for their own joy. I’m leaving this book on my shelf to reach for this season when I need a momentary pause. A warming rendition of “The Christmas Song” can’t fail to lift the spirits! (Hal Leonard, \$16.99; other formats available) — *Hannah Roberts*



HANNAH ROBERTS serves as Assistant Professor of Piano at the University of Alabama. She holds a DMA degree from the University of Oklahoma and is an advocate for the music of forgotten female composers.

THE NEW BUSONI EXERCISES AND STUDIES FOR THE PIANO, VOLUMES 1 AND 2

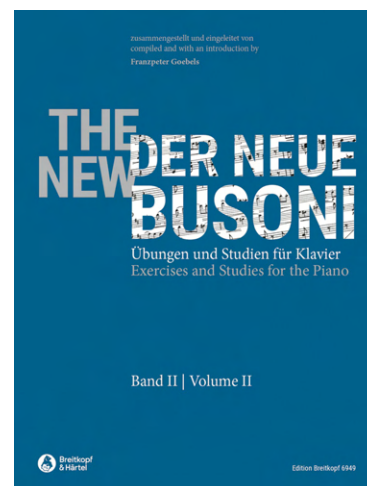
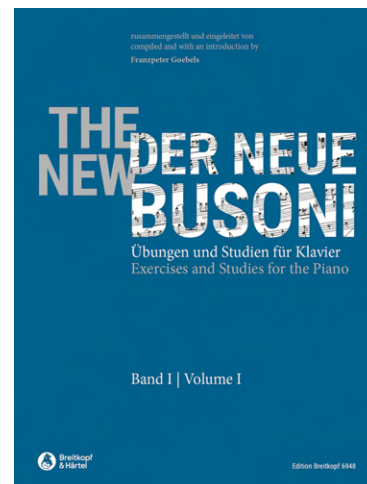
by Ferruccio Busoni *edited by* Franzpeter Goebels

Wouldn't it be wonderful to become acquainted with Busoni as a pedagogue? These publications draw well-deserved attention alongside the treatises of Couperin, C.P.E. Bach, Clementi, Czerny, Cramer, and Leschetizky, to name a few. The previously published *Klavierübung* of the master has been reorganized, while eliminating redundant and outdated material, and has been rereleased into two volumes.

The first volume includes several types of finger exercises followed by elucidating notes by the editor. Scales are presented with non-traditional fingerings, rhythms, and groupings. Busoni's scales focus on distinct parts of the hand (inner, middle, and outer) to enhance its stability and flexibility. Broken-chord exercises avoid the crossing of fingers, while the middle part of the hand stabilizes the outer parts. For the exercises based on *arpeggios*, the editor notes the importance of mastery of stretching and the posture of the arm. Double-note exercises constitute the next section where fingering is provided for double chromatic scales and diatonic scales in thirds and sixths. Two pieces which prominently feature the trill comprise the following section in addition to fingering for several types of trills. There are also sections devoted to the technique of playing octaves, continuous switching between hands (silent changing of fingers) and staccato playing. The first volume concludes with Busoni's "Study rules for the Pianist"—sound advice for developing pianists which bears repeating.

The second volume encompasses studies derived from established repertoire. The works of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, and Cramer are represented while those by Aubert, Gounod, and Offenbach have been omitted. Busoni uses preludes, sonatas, etudes, and themes as the basis for these studies, in many cases enhancing their difficulty. Excerpts from the works are developed and varied to highlight technical issues such as perfect *legato*, wide leaps, and voicing, among many others. The editor observes that these studies can be played to aid the learning of the original works or as an "extension" of the exercises in the first volume.

The range of this method makes it suitable for both intermediate and advanced-level pianists. In Busoni's own words, "one should offer material within the reach of the pupil." This method reveals his ability to transform the simplest of ideas into complex ones. It manifests not just the desire to develop technical prowess but the creativity that it takes to rearrange ideas for the purpose of study. He aptly noted, "technique being only one part of the art of piano playing, it does not lie in the fingers and in the wrists only, or in strength and endurance, the greater part of technique lies in the brain." (Breitkopf & Härtel, \$37.95, \$38.95; other formats available) — *Evelyn Dias*



EVELYN DIAS has performed in the United States, France, Czech Republic, and India. A former instructor at Northwestern University, she currently serves as Assistant Professor of Music at Divine Word College in Epworth, IA.

DIDN'T MY LORD DELIVER DANIEL?: Concert Scherzo for Two Pianos, Four Hands

by Thomas H. Kerr Jr. *edited by* Susanna Garcia and William Chapman Nyaho

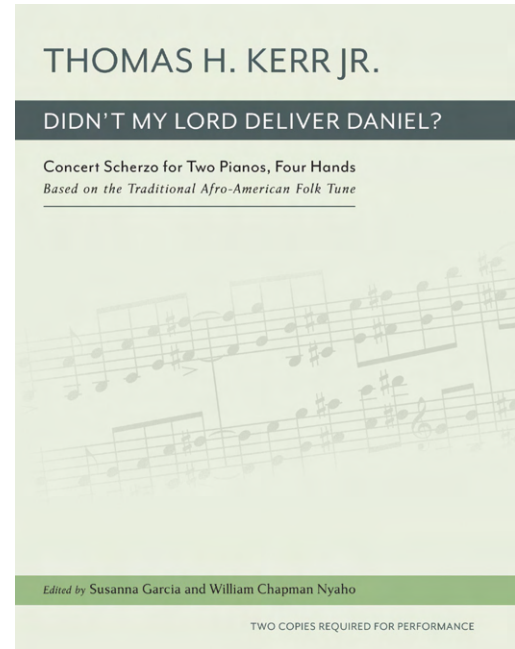
This work is a compelling addition to the piano duet canon. Created during Kerr's early career, this composition reflects his commitment to integrating African American musical and folk traditions with classical pianism. His innovative compositional approach offers a rich exploration of hope, struggle, and freedom.

Built around the Negro spiritual "Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel," the piece is structured in a theme-and-variations format, comprising six interconnected variations. The avoidance of repetitive structures is evident in the varied lengths of the variations and the transitional interludes between them, creating a dynamic and engaging listening experience that is both cohesive and expansive.

The two-piano arrangement allows for a rich palette of textures and colors. The work opens with a powerful G minor statement of the theme, characterized by strong rhythmic octaves and a driving accompaniment. The first variation, in F major, features octave passages against syncopated figures, introducing a playful yet intense tone. This is followed by an *Allegro barbaro* in B-flat minor, marked by extreme accents and agitation, and showcases dramatic contrasts with flair.

The journey continues with a nostalgic and *cantabile* Variation III in E-flat major, providing a moment of lyrical reflection. Variation IV returns to G minor in a *scherzando* style, adding a lighter, more playful character. The final variations remain in G minor, with Variation V introducing a mysterious *pizzicato* bass that leads to a dramatic conclusion. The piece culminates in a Finale: *Tempo Grandioso*, where the syncopated figures of the theme are brought to a thrilling climax.

The editing by Susanna Garcia and William Chapman Nyaho is exemplary. Utilizing original manuscripts from the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, their notes clarify and facilitate performance with precise pedaling and fingerings, crucial for achieving Kerr's intended effects. Their meticulous attention to detail provides valuable insights for performers, enhancing the interpretive possibilities of the piece.



Designed for advanced-level pianists, this compelling work is a recommended addition to both pedagogical and performance repertoires. Its rhythmic complexity and expressive depth present a rewarding challenge for students and a captivating experience for audiences.

Overall, this work represents a significant contribution to the two-piano repertoire and vividly portrays a breadth of creative and emotional range. Its blend of technical prowess and emotional depth makes it a valuable addition to any pianist's repertoire and a worthy choice for duet performances. (Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy, \$19.99)

— Jenny Jieun Park



JENNY JIEUN PARK teaches at SUNY Dutchess and directs their community music school in Poughkeepsie, NY. Scholarly interests include research on piano performance and pedagogy and understanding intrinsic motivation using the lens of a psychological framework of flow.

LEAD SHEET LAB

by Sally Ritchi

Fun New Theory Board Game for the Studio!

This chemistry-themed music theory game is a comprehensive resource for teaching students the fundamentals of chord building and comprehension. The game guides students through four levels of lead sheets with the goal to complete the chords located on the chemical beakers on each board. The game can also be timed, with the winner completing the most chords before time runs out.

Best suited for groups of two to four, each student will have their own game board, specialty coated for dry-erase markers, to construct their chords. Each game board includes a breakdown of how many half steps make up every major, minor, or perfect interval labeled as the “elements.” Students have access to “formulas” that list the intervals required to build each type of chord. This detailed breakdown helps to make the game accessible to students with varying familiarity of chords. During the game, students will build chords, notating in root position on the staff, and marking them on their board's keyboard diagram.

To build their chords, students take turns collecting the necessary cards. This can be done by drawing a card from the draw pile, taking the top card from the discard pile, or asking their opponents for their desired letter of the chord. If a letter requires a sharp or flat, students will notate it on the card using their dry-erase marker. Rare “Wild!” and “Bam!” cards add a fun twist, enabling students to substitute a letter or complete a chosen beaker. As students wait for their next turn, they can use the time to plan their strategy for building the next chord.

With a range of four levels of difficulty, the game is suitable for both beginner and intermediate-level students. Level 1 includes only major chords. Level 2 includes major, minor, and dominant-seventh chords. Level 3 includes dominant-seventh, M6, m6, sus2, sus4, and slash (C/G) chords. Level 4 includes M7, m7, M6, m6, sus2, sus4, augmented, and diminished chords. All four levels are printed on double-sided boards, allowing for mixed-level group classes.

In addition to the detailed game instructions, teachers can access a demo on how to play from the website: keystoimagination.com/product/music-theory-game-lead-sheet-lab/. This game is sure to become a studio favorite, with boards and cards built to last for years. (Keys to Imagination, \$34.95) — *Lisa Mioduszeowski* 🎹



“This game is sure to become a studio favorite, with boards and cards built to last for years.”



LISA MIODUSZEWSKI is a pianist, pedagogue, and adjudicator in the Chicagoland area. She completed her master's degree in piano performance at the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University.

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MUSIC AND MIND: Harnessing the Arts for Health and Wellness

edited by Renée Fleming; review by Suzanne Schons

Most people know Renée Fleming as one of the most highly acclaimed opera singers in the world; she has also emerged as a leading advocate for research and education on how music and the arts impact human health and wellbeing. In this expansive book, Fleming compiles essays from leaders in a wide range of fields including science, health care, therapy, performing arts, and education, to explore fascinating research and powerful experiences involving music's role in human life. Interspersed among research-oriented essays are poignant contributions from individuals on the healing impact of music in their lives. This book is not a quick read—its nearly 600 pages are packed with content, some of which takes time to digest and ponder. Although one can certainly read it cover to cover, that is not necessary; the book is organized into seven main sections, with four to eight essays per section that can each stand alone, so jumping around to read whichever essays one chooses is also effective.

Readers will want to be sure to take in the forward by Francis Collins, senior investigator of the National Human Genome Research Institute and former director of the National Institutes of Health. In it, he describes the consequential occasion when he and Renée Fleming met and began collaborating (an interesting story involving a fancy dinner party and three U.S. Supreme Court justices), and some significant events and developments that preceded this book coming together. Following Collins's forward, Fleming provides an introduction which further details her journey as a proponent of the therapeutic properties of music and provides an overview of what is in the book and why.

The first section of the book is focused on basic science concerning human musicality. Among the authors in this section are Daniel Levitin, with an essay on current understandings of what it means to be musical, and Aniruddh Patel provides information on how animal studies are shedding new light on longstanding questions regarding the nature of human musicality. (Anyone who has a dog who seemingly responds to music will enjoy reading Patel's paragraphs on the evolution of singing and research on dog howling and will even find information on how to join a research study on it!)

The majority of the book is devoted to the impact of music and the arts on human health, with specific foci on clinical settings, community initiatives, and music as therapy. It is exciting and moving to learn of the depth and breadth of ways that music and the arts can improve physical and mental health. Examples include exploring the effects of music on cardiovascular

health, chronic pain management, stress reduction, mood enhancement and emotional expression, speech recovery, pulmonary function, uses in neonatal and oncology settings, and more. The essay on music as a form of self-expression in adolescent cancer treatment is both informative and emotional. The data and narratives on using music to reach dementia patients and to cope with multiple sclerosis are strong testaments to music's therapeutic capacities. Roseanne Cash also provides a recounting of her complicated road to pursuing a diagnosis and treatment for Chiari malformation and how it impacted her music making.

The section "Creative Learning: Educators and Researchers Illuminate the Effects of Arts Engagement on the Developing Brain" is an important one for educators, especially Indre Viskontas's essay "Humans are Musical Creatures: The Case for Music Education," and "State of the Art: National Statistics on Music in America's Schools" by Ken Elpus. Indeed, reading the book generates a renewed sense of just how vital music education is to individuals and society and of the relentless need to convey that message to those who make decisions about curricula. *Music and Mind* illustrates how powerfully music impacts the human experience at all stages of life, and the ways in which it permeates and benefits many professions.

The last two sections of the book delve into yet more research and findings on the healing powers of music and the arts, including their role in integrative health, memory and aging, and brain injuries, to name a few, and on the future of research. Yo-Yo Ma's essay on the state of the planet and how he promotes culture to connect people to nature and to each other is a timely one with important implications for all.

Music and Mind will be a treasured resource for anyone who cares about music, the arts, health, education, research, science, and the countless ways those fields intersect. It provides compelling evidence for the importance of funding music and arts education, research, and initiatives. It was no doubt a colossal task to pull together all this content from numerous contributors into one organized and well-edited volume. Readers are encouraged to soak it all in to enjoy, learn, and grow in their own arts advocacy endeavors. (Viking, 2024, 592 pages, hardcover \$36; other formats available) 📖



SUZANNE SCHONS is Senior Adjunct Professor at the University of St. Thomas and a piano instructor at K&S Conservatory of Music in Minnesota. She holds a PhD in Music Education with an emphasis in Piano Pedagogy.

RECORDING

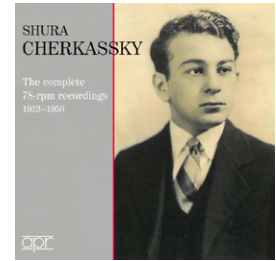
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Shura Cherkassky (1909–1995) was the embodiment of the stereotypical “mercurial” musician; his freewheeling manner at the piano drove conductors to distraction and made certain critics foam at the mouth with rage. The 13-year-old of 1923 was a very different musician than the variable pianist heard on more easily available Nimbus CDs made in the 1980s and early 1990s. In the early 1920s, Cherkassky had not yet studied with the temperamental Josef Hofmann, nor had he yet suffered decades in the wilderness before his career renaissance of the 1980s. The golden tone, caressing *rubato*, and elfin touch are all present without any sign of

what would later occasionally cross into willfully naughty musical behavior. It is hard to believe that a teenager wrote the über-Romantic *Prélude Pathétique*, let alone was capable of playing it with such adult ardor. Of special interest are his electric performances of the Siloti version of the Tchaikovsky *Concerto no. 2* (with a sloppy Santa Monica Symphony), sparkling Mendelssohn *Scherzo Op. 16*, and the megacolorful recording of American female composer Manazucca’s heartbreaking *Prelude Op. 73*, a piece that deserves to be revived by every romantically inclined modern pianist.

—Richard Masters

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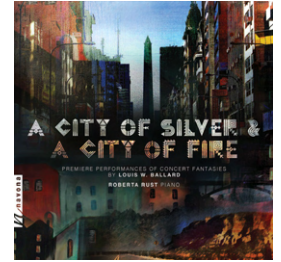
A CITY OF SILVER & A CITY OF FIRE

Roberta Rust, *piano*

Navona NV6429

[Total Time 14:52]

navonarecords.com



Roberta Rust's performances of two concert fantasies composed by Louis W. Ballard are from a live recording made in 1984. The recital is reported to be the first by a Native American performer of compositions by a Native American composer at Carnegie Hall. The two fantasies represent different cities which the composer felt had a major influence on humanity: *City of Silver* is about Buenos Aires, Argentina, and the disappearance of people in the 1970s at the hands of the Argentinian army; and *City of Fire* is about Los Alamos, in New Mexico, and the

Manhattan Project's Trinity Test, the first atomic bomb test which led to profound health problems for the city's population. These powerful works are filled with intense storytelling. Ballard's style of composition is clearly marked by juxtapositions of tone color against contrapuntal mastery. Rust's committed performance meets the contrasts and demands required from both works.

—Kristín Jónína Taylor

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...OF DREAMS UNVEILED

Clare Longendyke, *piano*

[Total Time 76:50]

clarelongendyke.com



The compositions of Amy Williams (b. 1969) and Anthony R. Green (b. 1984) are on full display in Clare Longendyke's expertly crafted debut album, "...of dreams unveiled." Organized into seven sub-sections grouping Williams's *Piano Portraits* with selections from Debussy's *Préludes*, the album runs the gamut of emotion. In Longendyke's capable hands, the listener embarks on a tour beginning with meditative mysticism, building into frenetic exultation, and culminating finally in explosive virtuosity. One of the album's greatest gifts is in giving us new ears with which to hear Debussy's *Préludes*. Pairing these staples with Williams's vignettes draws our attention to the music in a fresh way, something akin to how Debussy's contemporaries experienced his novel colors and textures. Longendyke's interpretation of the *Préludes* presents an unusual sense of clarity in relief of the enveloping, sometimes kaleidoscopic timbres of Williams's Portraits. Green's compositions pose a natural evolution of Debussy's style, with his *Fugue – suivant 'Des pas sur la neige'* showcasing Longendyke's strength and virtuosity. For unexpected listeners, the closing track, *To Anacreon in the US*, could be mistaken as a continuation of Debussy's eruptive *Feux d'artifice*. All selections are thoughtfully chosen and passionately performed, leaving us to eagerly anticipate Longendyke's next projects.

—Sarah Rushing

"Pairing these staples with Williams's vignettes draws our attention to the music in a fresh way, something akin to how Debussy's contemporaries experienced his novel colors and textures."



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REYNALDO HAHN: POÈMES & VALSES

Pavel Kolesnikov, *piano*

Hyperion, CDA68383

[Total Time 71:15]

hyperion-records.co.uk



Renowned pianist Pavel Kolesnikov delights the listener in this album of selections by Reynaldo Hahn. Six waltzes are positioned between two sets of poems, creating a brilliant and delectable musical sandwich. In the waltzes, Kolesnikov expertly demonstrates his dexterity, flexibility, and freedom of expression, superbly rendering Hahn's unique blend of Venezuelan and French flavors. Whether in the more robust *Valse noble* (No. 4), the buoyant *Assez vite* (No. 6), or the intimately sensual *La feuille* (No. 9), Kolesnikov's interpretations immerse the listener in a richly varied and evocative landscape.

As delightful as the waltzes are, the nineteen selections from Hahn's *53 Poems for Piano (Le Rossignol Éperdu)* are the true gems of this album. Hahn's singular writing coupled with Kolesnikov's consummate execution is nothing short of enchanting—in the genuinely hypnotic sense. Each brief vignette ingeniously encapsulates its title (or is it the other way around?). Kolesnikov captures uninhibited washes of emotion (*Love! Love!*), regal elegance (*The Wedding of the Duke of Joyeuse*), relentless resolve (*The Pointless Pilgrimage*), and the regrettably relatable wandering of *The Dance of Love and Boredom*. Especially in the many introspective moments, Kolesnikov's crystalline, delicate tonal clarity and spacious sense of timing are truly mesmerizing. —*Michael Dean* 📖



In addition to national and international performances as a member of the Manno-Dean Piano Duo, MICHAEL DEAN is in demand as a soloist and collaborative artist. He serves on the Oklahoma Music Teachers Association board and maintains an active schedule as a piano teacher, workshop clinician, and adjudicator.



RICHARD MASTERS is a soloist, opera coach, and conductor based in Blacksburg, VA, where he is an associate professor of piano and collaborative piano on the music faculty at Virginia Tech's School of Performing Arts.



SARAH RUSHING is Assistant Professor of piano at West Texas A&M University. She enjoys playing music off the beaten path. Her research focuses on the piano works of Debussy and Brahms.



KRISTÍN JÓNÍNA TAYLOR is Assistant Professor of Piano at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She performs regularly throughout the US and Europe as a solo pianist as well as with the Atlantic Piano Duo.

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by Craig Sale

I am hoping to enter my students in local contests and festivals this year. As my students haven't played in competitions before, I'd like some suggestions on how to prepare students for evaluation.

Before entering a student in a contest or festival, it is necessary to have discussions with the student and their parent/guardian. All parties need to know what type of event you are suggesting they participate in. (Some parents want competition, others don't. They need to know what to expect.) I find it most important to explain *why* you think they should participate and why the event is a good choice. One reason to participate is to get feedback—to learn ways in which the performance can become even more effective. Simply gaining more experience in playing musically for others is also a worthwhile reason. Although students are sometimes motivated to win a prize, I never discuss this as an intended goal. It's just “icing on the cake.”

It is important for the student to know, from the outset, that they are working toward a very special performance. They are preparing material to perform “away from the nest” of your studio. To perform outside of the studio is a big step toward musical independence. It is exciting but also challenging. It requires that the student be in total command of their material. Practice which successfully prepares the student for evaluation is usually more demanding than the practice done from lesson to lesson. The student and their parent/guardian need to be aware of this.

Researching events in advance is necessary. Most festivals and competitions have printed or online materials explaining the event and its mission. It is often helpful to speak to other teachers who have had students participate in these events.

I am not a fan of putting all students in the same competition, as not every student is the same. An average student sent to a competition with the highest standards will be judged very critically—they won't “win” and will receive few compliments. Likewise, placing your finest students in a festival designed to support and encourage is not appropriate if you want them to be challenged and critiqued with the highest standards. Effective adjudicators will make their assessment fit the competition setting and the performer.

The teacher's responsibilities continue after the event, with a post-performance discussion. I always begin by asking the student how they felt about their performance. Then, if I have received the adjudicator's comments, we go over these together. There may be times when the comments contradict

how the student has been prepared. There is nothing wrong with this—it presents a good opportunity to discuss the different ways people hear and interpret music. In most cases, it is not about a right way and a wrong way, but about expanding the choices available for the performer.

If the adjudicated event is treated as a learning opportunity by the student, the student's teacher, and the adjudicator, chances are that all will benefit and grow. 🎹



CRAIG SALE is Senior Editor for *Piano Magazine* and Director of Online Courses for the Frances Clark Center. He directed the preparatory piano department at Concordia University Chicago for thirty years and recently taught piano pedagogy at the University of Arizona.



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