

Lively, in the true style to which we have become accustomed from this distinguished musical educationalist and composer, each of the Latin, Blues, Swing, Waltz or Boogie/Latin can be performed singly or as a complete concert performance. Either way, the fun element cannot fail to entertain and please performers and listeners alike. All five movements are quite substantial with the first being an energetic fast work, the main motif in 7/8 time but with many changes of time signature as it unfolds thereby introducing other rhythmic patterns. The second movement is a gently rocking Blues which mostly explores the quiet end of the dynamic range, while the third movement – Swing – also has a gentle main theme which alternates with contrasting episodes but is mostly worked in a long crescendo to the end. The Waltz is another gentle recurring theme with funky bass accompaniment which disappears into a very quiet, slow ending, and the Finale, Boogie/Latin, is a fun swingin' movement with many syncopated accents and cross rhythms over triplet bass motifs before leading into the return of the original energetic Latin theme of the opening piece, ending the entire work with aplomb.

Well written with interesting material for both players, if somewhat overly uniform throughout in that the Primo player has all the melodic material, often in unison octaves, while the Secondo player provides the harmonic foundations with characteristic quirky rhythmic patterns to fit the style of the music. Great fun to play and tricky to count and work on the fine points of ensemble, this music will please and delight all students of Grades 7 and beyond while providing excellent sight-reading practice for the more advanced players who may well choose to change parts during the performance to get an opportunity to play at both ends of the colourful spectrum.

■ **Nadia Lasserson**

Reviews by Jenny Macmillan

Bastien Assignment Book

A personal music study planner

Kjos Music Press

ISBN 0-8497-7405-5

\$4.95

I like clarity. I like to know what I'm supposed to do. I like structure. And I like targets. I don't have time to read through lots of waffle, but I like tables of basic facts. So this book scores highly for me. For each lesson over a period of a year, the teacher has a complete page on which to write:

- Private lesson assignments
- Group lesson assignments
- A note to parents

Each page includes two lines of blank score which could be used by either teacher or pupil, and also a box for pupils to make a note about their daily practice – time of day or length of practice.

At the end of the book are pages on which to write:

- Names of memorised pieces
- Record of performances
- Scales and cadences learned
- Short term and long term repertoire goals

Two pages of *Keyboard Theory Awards* have boxes to be filled with stickers (or coloured in) when pupils can, for instance, write space and line notes, recognise and play notes from flash cards, play major and minor chords in all keys, or recognise or write sharp or flat key signatures (a wide range of musical development is covered here).

A progress report is followed by a useful appendix which gives one page of each of:

- Summary of groups of keys for playing major scales and arpeggios (C-G-F, D-A-E, Db-Ab-Eb, Gb-Bb-B), though it would be useful to have arpeggio fingerings rather than degree of scale on the diagrams. It would also be useful to have a summary of minor keys as well as major keys.
- How to play dominant 7th and subdominant chords from a tonic chord; also explanations of major key signatures – but why omit minor key signatures?
- Names of western composers from the 17th to 20th centuries, giving their dates and nationalities.
- Dictionary of the most common musical terms.
- Monthly financial statements. Personally, I wouldn't want to write the cost of music lessons and sheet music in a pupil's book such as this. It seems far too commercial (and not very subtle) to put an exact price on the child's study for the child to see every day.

This is a useful planner for teachers who like to keep themselves and their pupils organised.

Theory Gymnastics

Laura Zisette, Charlene Zundel, Kathleen Lloyd

5 levels of books for children \$19.95 each

5 teacher guides \$14.95 each

Kjos Music Press

ISBN 0-8497-6334-7

ISBN 0-8497-6375-4

Theory Gymnastics is a major series of theory and aural training books. It's thorough, it's comprehensive, it's American. In addition to the five levels of books for children, each with an accompanying teacher guide, there are further books for teens and adults and for advanced levels. Associated materials for games have also been produced. According to the publisher, these resources are used to prepare students for theory and ear-training exams throughout the USA. American terms such as 'measure' and 'eighth note' are used. But that is not necessarily a reason for avoiding this series in the UK.

The books can be used with groups of children, in individual lessons, and for practice at home. Discovery pages introduce each new concept. Practice pages allow pupils to demonstrate their newly acquired knowledge. Challenge pages offer more difficult questions on this material. Thinker pages offer fun brain teasers on the topic. Review pages creatively review previous material. Listening pages develop aural skills.

Each teacher book includes suggestions for group activities for every unit, a list of games that apply to each concept and suggestions for listening, as well as two sets of tests to help teachers assess when pupils are ready to progress to the next book.

The series seems excellent. However, at \$19.95 for each pupil book and \$14.95 for each teacher guide, this is not a cheap option for parents or teachers.

Piano Professional Reviews

Favourite Hymns

Arranged by Deborah Brady

Books 1, 2 and 3

Kjos Music Press

ISBN 0-8497-9752-7

\$6.50

The three books of *Favourite Hymns* feature arrangements of traditional hymns for elementary pianists. The pieces are written in the five-finger hand position. The main disadvantage of this is that, when the tune occasionally spans a sixth and a note is to be played in the left hand, the left hand may also be playing an accompaniment note. This makes it difficult (for elementary pianists) to maintain the quality of sound required for the melody. Several hymns (particularly in book 1) are given a duet accompaniment for the teacher to play along with the pupil. Rather pious pictures accompany each hymn.

Two-by-Two

Sacred Duets for one piano four hands

Arranged by Weekley & Arganbright

Kjos Music Press

ISBN 0-8497-9755-1

\$5.95

Dallas Weekley and Nancy Arganbright Weekley share their love of piano duets by performing large numbers of duet concerts worldwide, particularly in America, making recordings, giving masterclasses and editing books of duets. Whatever one's performing level, playing duets gives an added dimension in sound and expression, as well as being socially rewarding.

Each of the three duet arrangements in this book combines two tunes. The first combines *O Worship the King* with *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*; the second *Morning has Broken* with *O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing*; the third *Forest Green* with *Jesus shall Reign*. They are well arranged for two players of around grade 4 standard.

■ **Jenny Macmillan**

Review by Kate Miller

Beethoven. Piano Sonatas op 79 and op. 81a

Alfred Masterwork Edition, edited by Stewart Gordon.

\$5.99 and \$6.99

These single copies of Beethoven sonatas are from the four volumes Alfred edition of the complete sonatas edited by Stewart Gordon. They are excellent.

Stewart Gordon has consulted the autograph manuscripts, first editions and many of the most esteemed editions, when decisions have had to be made due to lack of clarity or inconsistencies in the first editions.

The format is very attractive, with photos of Beethoven, background information relevant to each sonata, wonderfully clear text and no pedal markings, apart from Beethoven's own. Suggestions for the interpretation of ornaments etc. and comparisons of the various solutions offered by other editors (e.g. Schnabel, Arrau) are confined to the footnotes. Alfred have always excelled at producing attractive, really informative editions but I have often been irritated by their widespread, shadowy additions of phrasing and pedalling, and their frequent over prescriptive realisation of ornaments etc. This Beethoven edition is completely free of all that, and highly recommended.

■ **Kate Miller**

Review by Sarah Nicholls

Die Horende Hand (The Listening Hand) Piano Exercises for Contemporary Music.

Catherine Vickers

Schott ED 20174 ED 20184.

I was really happy to hear of the existence of these books of exercises for contemporary music. Over the last 15 years, I have often contemplated how the physical demands of the hand are so different in this repertoire – how scales and Chopin exercises don't really cover what is needed for more recent techniques and musical languages – and how warming up might be more effectively tuned to newer pieces. Overall, these books (excellently titled in my opinion) cover a lot of ground – from new systems of scales right through to inside piano techniques – and as such provide a very good introduction to new notational and technical ideas in contemporary music.

Vickers' introduction is encouraging and positive towards new explorers of this territory and she is thorough in her explanations, wanting to get students actively involved in choosing their own pathways through the exercises. Some of this text I found a little confusing but, overall, the plea to make choices and shape one's own work seems healthy.

The bulk of Volume One centres around scales and intervallic exercises which are designed to train pianists especially for Messiaen and for other repertoire using modes. Like in any exercise book, these fundamentals are extensive and repeated in many different forms and would certainly provide a thorough grounding. The 'Entire keyboard' section similarly presents athletic workouts for the pianist. 'Tone complexes' teaches pianists to read complex, chromatic chords – really useful grounding in grappling with notation such as in Messiaen again.

To my eyes, Volume Two was immediately much more engaging and more in the spirit of much contemporary music: extreme exercises in dynamics, articulation, clusters and so on give the pianist an excellent work out in the demands of a lot of modern music. Although a lot of these exercises were perhaps again at the limit of how demanding pieces may get, they were realistic in the use of sudden and extreme changes and I hope would be fun to pianists new to these sounds. I thought the information on p.41 on the harmonic series was excellent – it is so useful to get pianists trained in thinking about this aspect of our instrument.

The inside piano section is interesting and quite