

with CD accompaniments at differing speeds. In addition, after purchasing the books, pianists can also download these audio files through a website link. The series is for early-to-late intermediate students, and each collection contains eight different tunes.

Springer does a great job selecting worship tunes that are popular and immediately recognizable. He upholds the original integrity and interest of the music at a simplified level, thus living up to the "Not Just Another" title.

Book 1 is for early-intermediate students. The pieces offer satisfying arrangements with simplified harmonies, but basic modulations also challenge the student. Standouts in this volume are "Come, Now is the Time to Worship" and "Here I am to Worship." Both pieces immediately sound familiar and are musically satisfying, with soloistic openings, interludes, and codas. A student could proudly perform any of these arrangements in a worship service with the congregation singing along.

Book 2 adds a few more syncopations and nonchord tones. Typical musical features are left-hand arpeggiated figures and octaves with right-hand melodic lines and chords. "How Great is Our God" remains close to the original, and offers some extended harmonies and syncopated rhythms as well. It successfully accommodates the musical and technical limitations of an intermediate student by eliminating most large jumps and accidentals.

Although the final book is for late-intermediate students, the reading does not feel that much harder than that in *Book 2*. The book does offer more rhythmic challenges, including syncopated rhythms with sixteenth notes. A highlight here is "Trading my Sorrows." Rock-like rhythms in the left hand, a variety of articulations, and sophisticated pedal indications provide many interesting pedagogical topics

to discuss with the budding young church musician.

All arrangements are three-to-four minutes (with repeats), and each has lyrics for at least one verse. These books will satisfy the teacher looking for engaging praise music for intermediate students. (Alfred, \$9.99 ea)

—Artina McCain



(S4) The Book of Piano Magic, by Peter Rudzik.

Fantastical scenes—complete with fairies, gnomes, and spells—certainly spark the imagination, and composer Peter Rudzik's collection contains aptly titled pieces on these subjects. His magical piano landscapes depict imagery through chromatic harmonies and unexpected note combinations, all the while relying on catchy tunes and repetitive rhythms. Musical markings abound, including indications for pedaling, articulation, dynamics, and expressive timing. And, the artistic sparkling cover with a wizard at the piano is likely to pique a student's curiosity.

Each of the nine short character pieces (two-to-four pages each) has compelling musical imagery matched to a descriptive title, and most are in ternary

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form. Often, as in "An Ogre and a Mermaid" and "Playful Gnomes," there is a highly contrasting B section, followed by a nearly exact repetition of the opening A section. Other musical pieces are also incorporated, such as a waltz for a witch, "A Troll's Rag," and an Impressionistic "Beautiful Fairy." The titles befit the musical content, so much so, in fact, that one would suspect concrete imagery initiated the compositional process.

Rudzik's pieces, at a difficulty level similar to Beethoven's *Für Elise* and Bach's Two-Part Inventions, are ideal for late-intermediate pianists. Several pieces have left-hand melodies (used to depict the wizards and ogres) accompanied by right-hand triads and seventh chords. Accompaniment figures are predominantly chordal and use limited jump-bass patterns; arpeggio figures are confined to a single octave. The rhythmic vocabulary is basic, especially as compared to the pitch-related reading demands. There are several uses of parallel harmonic thirds in one hand, often chromatic in movement; for example, "Cheerful Pegasus" could be used as an etude in double thirds for the right hand.

"The Magical Secret Garden" is the most difficult composition of the set. The melody is buried in the texture, at the top of the left hand, and the right hand's running sixteenth notes are comprised of atypical chord and scale patterns. Thus, the pianist must have expert control of the texture and pedaling.

Due to Rudzik's harmonically adventurous style, accidentals pepper nearly every measure, and, sometimes, a majority of notes. The key signatures complicate reading; frequent natural signs and the use of augmented and diminished intervals result in tricky processing from score to hand. Therefore, these pieces pose an initial challenge in accurate reading for most students, and time must be devoted to internalizing the atypical sounds. In addition, Rudzik's YouTube videos of his complete recordings have the tremendous potential to facilitate learning. The musical results are well worth the effort, and these pieces could help stretch a late-intermediate pianist's boundaries into coloristic, chromatic styles of music. (Red Leaf Pianoworks. Digital download available at Sheet Music Plus, \$6.99)

—Sara Ernst

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