

cowboy version. The character of the piece depicts a leisurely horse ride on the prairie that suddenly comes to a crashing burst of reality as the amateur rider is brusquely bucked from the horse. The wild bucking in the final two measures is foreshadowed by what I call the “tumbleweed staccatos” in measures 2, 4 and 6 of the left hand suggesting that, perhaps, the horse is biding its time before showing its amateur rider who’s the boss.

If you’re familiar with old western movies featuring the music of Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, it’s pretty clear where my musical roots lay for this piece. What better way to bring Trigger into the music as well!

Telling stories, having fun, making references to the past, and evoking imagery are all intentions I consciously strive to incorporate in the music I write for early-level performers. Developing artistry is as equally important as early development of pianistic technique and solid musicianship. When young performers have a story to tell with the music they perform it spurs them (see what I did there?) towards developing a relationship with music as a means of expressing themselves more consciously, a proficiency which will then blossom in other forms of self-expression as well.

**Linda J. Purves** holds a Bachelor of Music in Composition from McGill University and has since furthered her piano studies with Sylvia Shadick-Taylor in Edmonton. She has been teaching piano and theoretical subjects for more than 20 years, and served as Mill Woods Music’s school director from 2005–2014. Her passion for bringing the best out of her students in all aspects of their lives is well recognized in the community. Linda has taught composition for Contemporary Showcase Edmonton’s Young Composer Program and is a popular adjudicator in piano and creative music classes. She especially enjoys writing piano pieces and enjoyable yet educational music for student development. Some of her pieces are included in the ACNMP Contemporary Showcase Syllabus. Linda was recently commissioned by Edmonton’s Contemporary Showcase. “My Owl Friend” for voice, piano and clarinet will be premiered as part of Contemporary Showcase Edmonton’s 25th Anniversary celebrations in November.



## The Gypsy Daisy

Peter Rudzik

The ancient tale of the gypsy who charms a lady from her home is one of the most popular of the traditional ballads in both Britain and North America. The earliest versions from Scotland tell how seven gypsies sing at a lord’s gate and entice the lady down. When she appears, they cast a spell over her, and she gives herself to the gypsy chief, Johnny Faa. When her lord returns and finds her gone, he pursues her, and captures and hangs the gypsies.

In most North American versions, the story is more light-hearted: the lady simply runs away, and tells her pursuing

lord that she prefers to live with her gypsy lover. Even though the subject matter is very entertaining and politically incorrect (it involves alcohol, extramarital affairs and racial bias), that was not the reason why I chose this particular song. The answer is more pedestrian—I was looking for a melody that would appeal both to children and me. I sight read literally hundreds of Canadian folk tunes—thank you, Calgary Public Library—and found the experience very rewarding. Since I was born in Poland and didn’t grow up here, I basically didn’t know any of them, so in a way I filled that gaping hole in my Canadian education. After a while I narrowed down my choices to 5–6 songs. At first I was very intrigued by Inuit tunes and even wrote a little piece based on an Inuit Weather Chant (it’s available as a free download on my website), however the upbeat and humorous melody of “The Gypsy Daisy” appealed to me more.

The choice I made was a simple one: retain the original melody and harmonize it in a bit more modern way, while still maintaining its character.

The first version was too difficult, full of octaves, thick chords and leaps. It sounded great but was way above the required Grade 6 level, so I had no choice but to strip it down to what it is now: still fun to play but also attainable and accessible to intermediate students playing the piano.

I taught this piece to several of my students already and know its challenges. As a composer I don’t always pay attention to what is easy or difficult; I listen for the sounds that appeal to me. However, as a teacher I didn’t have a choice: I made my students repeat measures 5–6 hands separately and mostly slowly, many, many, many times. First of all, the eight chords in that phrase are all unique and on top of that you still need to voice them well, otherwise the melody line won’t be very clear. When students learn this passage well, the rest is smooth sailing. I certainly hope you enjoy teaching this piece to your students.

**Peter Rudzik**, a Master of Music in piano performance from the Academy of Music in Gdansk, has won many awards in Poland, where he was born. In 1984 a scholarship from the Chopin Society in Warsaw led to numerous recitals and appearances on national television and radio. Of special acclaim was a performance at the National Piano Festival in 1987. In 1989 Peter received a scholarship for postgraduate studies at the Royal Danish Conservatory of Music in Copenhagen, Denmark. Peter has established one of Calgary’s elite, high-profile piano studios. Many of his students, which cover all levels from beginners to the licentiate, have achieved top levels of excellence both provincially and nationally. His piano collections were featured and reviewed by *International Piano*, *Clavier Companion*, *The Canadian Music Teacher*, *Impromptu*, *The Piano Professional*, *Tempo* and *The American Music Teacher*. Peter Rudzik is a member of Red Leaf Pianoworks collective.



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