

THE BOOK OF PIANO MAGIC

by Peter Rudzik

Red Leaf Pianoworks

Peter Rudzik is a recent addition to the Red Leaf Pianoworks team, and his collection "The Book of Piano Magic" is one of his most recent publications. This set elicits creativity through exploration of mysticism and the supernatural. From the witty and jovial *Playful Gnomes* to the world of fantasy in *The Magical Secret Garden*, to the dizzying chromaticism of *Two Wands, Three Spells*, this set has something for everyone.

The *Ogre and the Mermaid* cleverly juxtaposes the picture of a clumsy and grumpy old troll with an ethereal and graceful mermaid. Written in a march style, this piece is an excellent opportunity for intermediate-level students to enhance their mastery of two to a bar in 6/8 time. *A Dancing Witch* also stands out, through its witty adaptation of a classic waltz form. This diabolical dance takes unexpected twists and turns through tonality, dissonance, and jazz harmonies that paint a vivid picture of the witch, her sorcery and other antics.

"The Book of Piano Magic" is a collection that will provide ample opportunities for intermediate-level students to explore their creative side. Experimentation with colourful harmonies, advancing use of pedal, multi-layered textures and a need for organic use of rubato are only a few of the musical elements that are explored in this series. Students and teachers alike will delight in overcoming these challenges in each and every one of the 9 solos in this enchanting collection.

Christine Tithecott - Ontario

SPROUTS

20 Elementary Piano Solos

Red Leaf Pianoworks RLP-PC001

This is the first anthology of pieces by the Canadian composers of Red Leaf Pianoworks, released in time to coincide with celebrations of the 150th anniversary of confederation. The collection contains a wide variety of engaging music to appeal to the interests of diverse students. Some titles of note include *Beside the Brook, Ghostly Games, The Sad Clown Waltzes Alone, Catch Me If You Can!, Polaris* and *The Blue Elf*. In addition to evoking a wide range of moods and images, the pieces contain technical and musical challenges appropriate to the development of students at this level, including legato and staccato playing, chromatic movement, movement up and down octaves, waltz accompaniment, balancing two hands, LH crossovers, and many dynamic and expressive markings. The book contains several features that will be appreciated by busy teachers. The table of contents clearly organizes the 20 pieces into sections for Preliminary, Level 1 and Level 2 students. Composer Notes summarize the technical and musical demands of each piece, making it easy to select an appropriate piece for each student. At the end of the book, biographies of each composer increase student awareness of Canadian composers and inspire an appreciation of piano music as a living art form. This collection is a valuable resource for students looking for ways to include Canadian music in their performance repertoire. The anthology format is a wonderful introduction to the works of a variety of composers and could serve as a springboard for students to

explore more of the work of a particular composer who has caught their attention. The preface to this volume indicates that there are plans to release more volumes of piano anthologies of increasing levels of difficulty in the next decade. If the first volume is any indication, subsequent volumes will be eagerly anticipated!

Nancy Mitchell - Ontario

PIANO SOLOS FOR EVERY OCCASION

Hal Leonard HL00200334

As it's name suggests this book is indeed serviceable for any occasion. With 208 pages and 63 pieces of music the advance musician would be delighted to have this book in their collection.

Titles vary and categories include Broadway, Classical, Jazz, Latin, Love and Wedding, Movie, New Age, Pop/Rock, Standards and even a section of Miscellaneous.

This collection is pretty much strictly for piano, as there are no lyrics or guitar chords. As such it makes for a great resource for occasions that require background music.

Laureen Kells - Saskatchewan

