

# 100 BEST BETS FROM MODERN PIANO LITERATURE

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## An Annotated Bibliography

Nancy O'Neill Breth

This bibliography lists modern piano compositions that I find rewarding to teach and play. The entries show composer (or editor), title, publisher, followed by a brief description of the character or merits of the piece. For collections or suites, I have singled out specific pieces that I consider particularly attractive.

The entries are roughly grouped by level. Ideas of what elementary, intermediate and advanced mean differ from teacher to teacher. A piece that seems very difficult to me may appear less so to someone else. Or vice versa. Nevertheless teachers talk and think in levels, so I have placed the pieces in the following five categories to provide at least a general sense of their difficulty levels.

- Elementary: suitable for students in about the third or fourth levels of method books.
- Elementary Plus: suitable for students playing earliest classics and starting the Anna Magdalena Bach notebook.
- Intermediate: suitable for students playing sonatinas and Bach Little Preludes.
- Intermediate Plus: suitable for students playing Bach Inventions and easier Preludes and Fugues or sonatas by Mozart and Haydn.
- Advanced: suitable for students playing advanced Bach Preludes and Fugues and more difficult classical sonatas.

A list like this is always a work in progress, but certain omissions are deliberate. Pieces that I can't confirm are still in print have been excluded. Also no works by Bela Bartok are included because of the sheer volume of his great compositions for pianists from beginner to virtuoso level. There are a few entries without comment. These are pieces I haven't tried yet, but that are included because of the strong recommendation of respected colleagues.

—Nancy O'Neill Breth  
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## Elementary

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**Goldstein, Frances, et al., eds.** *Contemporary Collection*. Warner Bros. 37 short pieces, many by composers you are not likely to find represented in other collections. Exceptionally high quality overall. David Kraehenbuehl's Scherzo on Tenth Avenue uses five-finger patterns of all types and unexpected rests to create a jazzy effect. The same composer's Toccata Breve is as simple to play as it is effective; and he explores the world of pedal in Snowfall and Dream World. Fred Ziller's Bells is probably the easiest piece in the book, but sounds impressive.

**George, Jon.** *A Day in the Jungle*. Warner Bros. 12 great little pieces from a great American composer. Full of humor and imagination. Good recital pieces.

**Goldston, Margaret.** *A Day in the Park*. Galaxy Music Corporation, of ECS Publishing. 5 pieces, all excellent. Amazingly varied sounds and moods, given the simplicity of the writing.

**Goolkasian-Rahbee, Dianne.** *Pictures, Op. 3*. Boston Music Co. Number 3 is simply an expressive half-note melody with a quarter-note accompaniment throughout; but the effect is lovely, especially if the student adds more pedal than is marked. Snowflakes Gently Falling uses the whole tone scale and pedal throughout.

**Kessler, Minuetta.** *My Toys*. Boston Music Co. Imaginative pieces using one-finger or other beginning techniques but with extensive movement around the keyboard.

**Kessler, Minuetta.** *The Improper Grasshopper*. Boston Music Co. Kessler creates surprisingly effective pieces with a bare minimum of technical demands. (There are hardly any eighth-notes, for example, in these 18 pieces.) Free use of the keyboard with lots of hand over hand, etc. Titles and lyrics are imaginative, often funny.

**Niamath, Linda.** *Soda Pop and Other Delights*. Frederick Harris. Sad, funny, scary and happy pieces by a fine Canadian composer. Sleepy Little Kitten; Hide and Seek; Playful Puppy; March of the Terrible Trolls; and Holidays Are Here! all highly recommended.

**Persichetti, Vincent.** *Little Piano Book*. Theodore Presser. Tiny pieces but not for tiny people. The combination of interesting ideas, brevity and technical accessibility makes them a good choice for beginning adults. Capriccio; Masque; Arietta.

**Poe, John Robert.** *Look to the Skies*. Myklas Press. The eight pieces in this group are named for various constellations. Canis Minor; Bootes; Aguila.

**Poole, Clifford.** *Clifford Poole—Piano Highlightss*. Frederick Harris. Poole's creations achieve high interest and variety while remaining easy to play. Pop-Corn is easy but uses the whole keyboard and is fast; March of the Finger-Snaps is very funny.

**Schonthal, Ruth.** *Miniscules*. Carl Fischer. Schonthal gets an amazing amount out of a few notes, as in Little Pony on a Stony Road; Little Dance; Walking Down the Road; The Bells on Top of the Hill; and Sunset. Good recital pieces for a beginner.

**Schonthal, Ruth.** *Pentatonics*. Carl Fischer. Very easy pieces; only half of them even use eighth notes. But Schonthal gets a lot out of simple rhythms and a five-note scale. Several are dreamy pedal pieces (Starry Night, Harbor Lights, Sitting by the Water's Edge); but other moods and sounds add interest (Fighting Ducks, The Girl on a Lazy Swing, Settling an Argument, A Quiet Day without Sun).

## Elementary Plus

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***Adventures in Time and Space: Studies for Contemporary Music.* Warner Bros.** Short melodic pieces concentrating on one or more technical problems. "These studies were planned to aid the modern piano student in the technical problems and stylistic aspirations found in contemporary music." Gnessina, Bartok, Mageau, Olson, Toch, Miaskovsky, others. The table of contents lists each etude's goal. In Level 1-2 of this three-book series, recommended pieces are Fife and Drum; As You Like It; Rain Rain Go Away; Perfect Get-Together.

**Agay, Denes, ed. *The Joy of Easy Modern Piano Pieces.* Music Sales Corp.** There are many attractive pieces in this collection, but even if there weren't it would be worth buying for *Tick-Tock Toccata* by Herbert Haufrecht. See also Elie Seigmeister's *Street Games* and Leo Smit's *Little Fanfare*.

**Alexander, Dennis. *A Splash of Color: Romantic and Contemporary Solos for the Intermediate Student.* Alfred Publishing Co.** Book 1 contains showy pieces with a slight Broadway/pop sound. Grey Granite is spare but grand, like Copland. Blue Boogie and Violetta are clever uptempo selections. Zinc Pink is evocative. The slow numbers can be treacly.

**Bolcom, William. *Monsterpieces.* Marks/Hal Leonard.** Ten attractive, accessible pieces with great illustrations and straight-talking helpful hints from the composer. Badminton; Big Mountain; and The Bad Mister are my favorites.

**Cowell, Henry. *The Irishman Dances.* Carl Fischer.** A swinging, athletic piece using both open and filled-in fifths (clusters) in LH; modal; polymetrical.

**Diemer, Emma Lou. *Space Suite.* Plymouth Music Co.** Includes 12-tone technique, string effects, changing meters, quartal chords. Space Monkey; Space People Dancing; Radio Waves; Toward Mars; Frequency Bands.

**Dutkiewicz, Andrzej. *The Puppet Suite.* Kjos.** Excellent collection. A Ride on a Bumpy Road shows how funny 5/4 time can be. Careful dynamic markings, if followed, add greatly to the effect. Valsette is rather wistfull. Tick Tock Dream is on of the best (and easiest) pieces in the collection. Again the detail which this composer lavishes on articulation and dynamics almost guarantee an effective performance.

**Faith, Richard. *Moments in a Child's World.* Shawnee Press.** Woodpecker; Flamingo; March of the Lilliputians.

**Frid, Grigori. *Youthful Adventures.* Frederick Harris Music.** 14 pieces, most from 8 to 16 measures long. I'm So Sad, The Teddy Bear, The Jolly Fiddler, Little Waltz, Lullaby.

**Goldstein, Frances, et al., eds. *Contemporary Collection.* Warner Bros.** David Kraehenbuehl's Etude in White (parallel 6ths and 5ths) and Etude in Blue (syncopation) always make a big hit with youngsters. Scherzo and Rain by Dennis Riley make effective use of sharply accented 2nds and of changing time signatures.

**Goldston, Margaret. *The Magic Typewriter.* E. C. Schirmer.** The title piece is terrific, but all these pieces are interesting, especially Jump Rope; Splashing in Puddles; Moonlight Tide; and Journey to a Distant Star.

**Goldston, Margaret. *Adventures of an African Boy.* E. C. Schirmer.** Theme and variations. Vivid, brilliantly written little tone poems. The final variation is considerably more difficult than the rest of the piece.

**Goldston, Margaret. *Star Quest.* E. C. Schirmer.** Book 1 is another excellent collection that shows the craft and imagination of this composer.

**Goolkasian-Rahbee, Dianne. *Pictures, Op. 3.* Boston Music Co.** Quiet Promenade is a masterfully simple and beautiful etude on voicing. Chase is wild and fun to play, with the hands chasing one another all over the keyboard. Mosquito bites us with accents and staccato 2nds, with a surprise at the end. Great piece.

**Goolkasian-Rahbee, Dianne. *Pictures, Op. 3.* Boston Music Co. Haufrecht, Herbert. *Tick-Tock Toccata.* see Agay, *Joy of Modern Piano Pieces.***

**Karp, David. *Adventure in Sound.* Willis Music Co.** Imaginative titles and sounds introduce contemporary techniques.

**Kessler, Minuetta. *A Day in the Park.* Willis Music Co.** Let's go to the Park and Come Home (marked "Protestingly" and full of stubborn accents) are examples of the vocal character, humor and imagination of this composer's works.

**Niamath, Linda. *A Zoo for You.* Frederick Harris.** Eleven striking pieces; it would be good to perform a number of them in a group, as they are a little short to stand on their own on a recital. Penguins and Bears are two particularly attractive pieces.

**Papp, Lajos. *Story Scenes.* Theodore Presser.** Twenty very short pieces from Hungary, some reminiscent of Bartok but others quite different in style. The imaginative titles and markings in the music encourage imaginative playing. The Deep Well; Homesickness; The Witch; The Swineherd; Puss in Boots Gobbles Up the Mouse; etc.

**Persichetti, Vincent. *Parades, op. 57.* Theodore Presser.** Three pieces, of which March is the best. Double 3rds, triads, staccato; energetic and effective.

**Pinto, Octavio. *Children's Festival. G.* Schirmer.** Guaranteed to please, especially Little March; Serenade; and (more difficult) Playing Marbles.

**Poole, Clifford. *Clifford Poole—Piano Highlightss.* Frederick Harris.** A fine collection. Poole's creations achieve high interest and variety while remaining easy to play. Pop-Corn is easy but uses the whole keyboard and is fast; March of the Finger-Snaps is very funny.

**Rowley, Alec. *Colla Sinistra: 9 Easy Pieces for the Left Hand.* Willis Music Co.** See The Boosey & Hawkes 20th-Century Piano Collection.

**Sheftel, Paul, and Vera Willis. *Patterns for Fun.* Alfred Publishing Co. Publishing Co.** Sassy contemporary pieces with names like Oops!; Fifths & Starts.

**Seigmeister, Elie. *American Kaleidoscope.* Warner Brothers.** Twenty pieces. I recommend March, Song of the Dark Woods, Street Games, Boogie, Blues, Prairie Night, Old Time Dance, Fairy Tale, Monkey Business and Sunny Day. Some are early intermediate level.

**Smit, Leo. *Little Fanfare.* See Agay, *Joy of Modern Piano Pieces.***

## Intermediate

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**Adventures in Time and Space: Studies for Contemporary Music.** CPP/Belwin. Short melodic pieces concentrating on one or more technical problems. "These studies were planned to aid the modern piano student in the technical problems and stylistic aspirations found in contemporary music." Gnessina, Bartok, Mageau, Olson, Toch, Miaskovsky, others. The table of contents lists each etude's goal. In the Level 4-5 book, try Dance; Etude 2; Bits & Pieces. In the Level 5-6 book, try Etude 5 and Etude 6.

**Appleby, Martha, ed. Bravo Brazil.** Kjos West. Two volumes of Brazilian composers' works. I like Book 2 best. try Heitor Villa-Lobos, *Saci* and *A Lenda do Caboclo*; Claudio Santoro, *Paulistana No. 1*.

**Binkerd, Gordon. Concert Set for Piano.** Boosey & Hawkes. Witch-Doctor; Mice.

Intermediate Boosey & Hawkes 20th-Century Easy Piano Collection, The, York, ed. Boosey & Hawkes. Pipe Tune and Bells (for the left hand) by Alec Rowley; The Little Men and Rain by Jasper Rooper.

**Chagy, Robert. Israeli Sketches.** Willis Music Co. Eight pieces descriptive of Israeli places and events. Kibbutz is a rousing dance with changing metres. Tel Aviv is simple and effective. Chassidic Dance and Jaffa Cafe are also appealing.

**Chatman, Stephen. Amusements.** Frederick Harris. My favorite in this series is Book 3: Sneaky; Catnip Fit; Happy Cowgirl.

**Cowell, Henry. Album of Piano Music.** G. Schirmer/AMP. In volume 1, see Exultation; Aeolian Harp; Fabric; Tiger.

**Creston, Paul. Five Little Dances.** G. Schirmer. Rustic Dance; Languid Dance.

**Cuellar, Martin. Toccata.** FJH. Latin flavor show piece.

**Danielpour, Richard. Enchanted Gardens—Preludes Bk. 1.** Associated Music Publishers. The only one I've seen so far is Serenade; which is lovely and not hard to play.

**Dello Joio, Norman. Lyric Pieces for the Young.** Hal Leonard. Russian Dance; Prayer of the Matador.

**Diemer, Emma Lou. Adventures in Sound for Piano.** Warner Bros. Diemer: Short, imaginative pieces with wonderful illustrations. Jazz Echoes; Old Spanish Town; A Harp in the Sky; Wind in the West; The Kangaroo.

**Diemer, Emma Lou. Monkey Dance.** Music Sales Corporation. Energetic, humorous, very effective.

**Edwards, Ross. Little Piano Piece No. 1.** See Hinson, *The Century of Invention*.

**Faber, Nancy, and Randall Faber, eds. Ragtime and Marches.** FJH Music Co. Good arrangements of familiar and not-so-familiar rags for children to play.

**Faith, Richard. Finger Paintings.** Alfred Publishing Co. Twelve pieces, many of them in a lyrical style, often with a medieval feeling. Moonless Night is particularly evocative.

**Finney, Ross Lee. Nostalgic Waltzes.** Theodore Presser Co. #1 particularly recommended.

**Gershwin, George. George Gershwin for Piano.** Warner Bros. Contains *Merry Andrew*, *Three-Quarter Blues*, and *Promenade*, three pieces of great charm and appeal. They are considerably less difficult than the much better known *Preludes*, and just as much fun to play.

**Ginastera, Alberto. Rondo on Argentine Children's Folk Tunes.** Boosey and Hawkes. Four pages packed with variety and personality.

**Greene, Arthur. Seven Wild Mushrooms and a Waltz.** E. C. Schirmer. Avant-garde techniques with a sense of humor

**Hanson, Howard. *Clog Dance*. Carl Fischer.** Driving rhythm, fast parallel 5ths. Exciting.

**Hinson, Maurice, ed. *Anthology of 20th Century Piano Music*. Alfred.** Works by 37 composers ranging from intermediate to early-advanced levels. This is my favorite survey of contemporary literature. It contains many of the pieces listed in 100 Best Bets. There is a DVD by Dr. Hinson available at extra cost.

**Hinson, Maurice, ed. *The Century of Invention: Piano Music of the 20th Century*. European American Music Corporation.** A beautifully produced collection presents a wide variety of styles. Includes Hinson's descriptions of each piece and short composer biographies. Especially recommended: Ross Edwards, *Little Piano Piece No. 1*; Witold Lutoslawski, *Bukoliki*; Matyas Seiber, *Cakewalk*; Joaquin Turina, *Clowns and Fiesta*.

**Hinson, Maurice, ed. *Changing Faces*. European American Music Corp.** Seven late-20th century pieces give some idea of the variety of styles in this period. Includes Hinson's descriptions of each piece and short composer biographies. Especially recommended: Stephen Paulus, *Dance*; Tobias Picker, *Old and Lost Rivers*.

**Hovhaness, Alan. *Achtamar*. Theodore Presser Co.** In two parts: a haunting, improvisatory melodic section followed by a driving drum section. Written in imitation of Eastern instruments.

**Hovhaness, Alan. *Komachi*, op. 240. Peters.** Hovhaness' inspiration comes from the East. These are hauntingly beautiful in a Minimalist sort of way. Spirit of a Willow Tree; Flight of Dawn Birds; Rain on Blue Mountain; Moon Harp.

**Hovhaness, Alan. *Macedonian Mountain Dance*. Peters.** Polymetric. Fast, loud and showy. Four difficult measures of fast RH octaves.

**Ibert, Jacques. *Histoires*. MMP.** The Little White Donkey" is best known, but A Giddy Girl" is also excellent.

**Kessler, Minuetta. *A Day in the Park*. Willis Music Co.** A quirky sense of humor, a vocal quality, and extensive use of the keyboard distinguish this composer's work. The Slide; See Saw; Sand Pile."

**Khatchaturian, Aram. *Sonatina*. G. Schirmer.** 1st movement.

**Lees, Benjamin. *Kaleidoscopes*. Boosey & Hawkes.** Numbers 4 and 5 are particularly clever.

**Lutoslawski, Witold. *Bukoliki*.** See Hinson, *The Century of Invention*.

**Lutoslawski, Witold. *Album for the Young*. Chester.** These clever, humorous pieces have a folk-like melodic color and a folksy earthiness, but quite a contemporary sound. 22 pieces. The Grove; Bucolic 1; An Air.

**Muczynski, Robert. *Collected Piano Pieces*. G. Schirmer.** Muczynski is best known for his *Preludes* (included here), but he has written plenty of fine music for less advanced students, like *Fables*, op. 21 (#1, 3, 6, 7, and 9 especially recommended). In *Diversions*, op. 23, see especially #1, 2, 5, 6, 7, and 9 (#5, 6, and 7 work well together).

**Paulus, Stephen. *Dance*.** See Hinson, *Changing Faces*. Strong rhythms, dream-like B section. A terrific piece.

**Persichetti, Vincent. *Poems*. Elkan-Vogel.** Small tone poems on a variety of subjects. My favorite is Dust in Sunlight, which serves up this delicate image with a meditative, nostalgic flavor.

**Picker, Tobias. *Old and Lost Rivers*.** See Hinson, *Changing Faces*. Meditative, quiet. Hard to read (lots of ledger lines) but very pretty to listen to.

**Pinto, Octavio. *Scenas Infantis*. G. Schirmer.** Five pieces dedicated to the composer's children, complete with poetry. Challenging, expressive works of great charm.

**Poulenc, Francis. *Impromptus*. Chester.** Try Nos. 2, 3, and 4.

**Previn, Andre. *Impressions for Piano*.**

**Warner Bros.** Few of these 20 pieces are more than one page long, but Previn packs a lot of music (and technical challenge) into each page. They are like little tone poems. Poodles; Trees at Twilight; Mechanical Toy; In Perpetual Motion; and Roundup are especially fun.

**Prokofieff, Sergei. *Music for Children*, op.**

**65. G. Schirmer.** A classic collection that should not be forgotten.

**Prokofieff, Sergei. *Vision Fugitives*, op. 22.**

**Alfred, Schirmer, Warner.** Twenty short but sophisticated and challenging pieces. I particularly like #3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18.

**Rooper, Jasper. *The Little Men and Rain*.** See The Boosey & Hawkes 20th-Century Piano Collection.

**Rossi, Wynne-Anne. *A Trip Through the Rainforest*.** The FJH Music Company, Inc. Seven colorful pieces inspired by tropical forest images.

**Santoro, Claudio. *Paulistana No. 1*.** See Appleby, *Bravo Brazil!*

**Seiber, Matyas. *Cakewalk*.** See Hinson, *The Century of Invention*.

**Shaak, Bernard. *Events*.** Moonstone Music Press. These are pattern pieces, so they sound harder than they are. The showstopper is Book 4's Appalachian Air and Dance.

**Sheftel, Paul. *Interludes: Studies in Mood*.** Carl Fischer. The title says it. Effective pieces.

**Sheftel, Paul. *Preludes Interludes and Postludes*.** Alfred Publishing Co. Sheftel: "I wanted to write pieces which would sound hard without being so." Especially fun to play are You're Welcome; Guts; Scales.

**Smit, Leo. *Dance Card*.** Theodore Presser Co.

**Starer, Robert. *Album for Piano*.** Warner Bros. *Seven Vignettes* (Song Without Words; The Camel & the Moon); *At Home Alone* (Herman the Brown Mouse); *Sketches in Color*

**Sung, Stella. *Toccata*.** Theodore Presser.

**Takacs, Jenó. *Sounds and Colors*, op. 95.**

**Doblinger.** Short pieces with a sense of humor. They range from tonal to avant-garde, including some inside-the-piano activity, and provide a variety of styles and techniques. In a Great Hurry is my favorite.

**Tansman, Alexandre. *Pour Les Enfants*.** Hal Leonard.

Tansman is a 20th-century composer (1897-1986) with a 19th-century, Schumanesque voice. These collections actually would serve well to introduce a student to Romantic style, and are well worth owning for that purpose (for example, the beautiful Petite Reverie in set 3). On the other hand, there are some outstanding contemporary style pieces, like Russian Dance (1st set), Hide and Seek and Music of Bali (5th set). Tansman likes jazz harmonies and rhythm, and the Spanish style.

**Turina, Joaquín. *Clowns and Fiesta*.** See Hinson, *The Century of Invention*.

**Villa-Lobos, Heitor.** See Appleby, *Bravo Brazil!* Saci; A Lenda do Caboclo.

**Villa-Lobos, Heitor. *Piano Music Of Villa-Lobos*.** Dover. O Polichinelo.

**Wuensch, Gerhard. *Mini-suite No. 1*.** Boosey & Hawkes. Tarantella; Prelude.

**Wuensch, Gerhard. *Study in Mixolydian*, op. 41, no. 4, in *Celebration Series*, bk. 7.**

**Frederick Harris.** This has a fresh, laid-back jazzy feel and is great fun to play.

**Wuensch, Gerhard. *Twelve Glimpses into 20th Century Idioms*.** Boosey & Hawkes.

Wuensch: "The following 12 pieces are intended to provide a first glance at contemporary music. Their technical demands are very modest, and each study is preceded by short formulas, introducing the various devices employed. The explanatory notes are kept to a minimum since it has been the author's experience that very few piano students possess an insatiable curiosity for theoretical information." This same wry wit comes out in his music, for example, Oliver's Twist.

## Intermediate Plus

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**Albright, William. *Dream Rags*. Peters.** Try these 1960's rags as an alternative to Joplin. Onion Skin Rag is my favorite, except for the key signature.

**Barber, Samuel. *Excursions*, op. 20. G.**

**Schirmer.** Barber: "These are Excursions in small classical forms into regional American idioms. Their rhythmic characteristics, as well as their source in folk material and their scoring, reminiscent of local instruments, are easily recognized." All four pieces are wonderful.

**Barber, Samuel. *Nocturne*, Op. 33. G.**

**Schirmer.** Full of Chopinesque figuration over a typical rolling Nocturne bass line, this piece builds to a passionate climax and then ends wistfully. Its rollercoaster of emotions makes it great for teens.

**Berg, Alban. *Klavierstück in B Minor*.** See Hinson, *The Century of Invention*.

**Benjamin, Arthur. *Scherzino*.** See The Boosey & Hawkes 20th-Century Piano Collection.

**Bolcom, William. *Complete Rags for Piano*.**

**Hal Leonard.** Try these 1960's rags as an alternative to Joplin.

**Camargo-Guarnieri, M. *Dansa Negra*. Hal**

**Leonard.** Brilliant piece; complex rhythms and counterpoint.

**Copland, Aaron. *Piano Album*. Boosey &**

**Hawkes.** Eleven pieces including selections from *Four Piano Blues*, *Rodeo*, *Our Town*, and others. Young Pioneers especially recommended for young students.

**Copland, Aaron. *The Cat and the Mouse: Scherzo Humoristique*. Boosey & Hawkes, Alfred, MMP.** The title says it all.

**Copland, Aaron. *Three Moods*.** See The Boosey & Hawkes 20th-Century Piano Collection.

**Creston, Paul. *Prelude and Dance*, op. 29, no. 2. Shawnee.** Meditative. *Prelude* introduces lushly harmonized pentatonic melody, which gradually sheds sound layers, accelerates and descends into the bass register, where it explodes into the *Dance* ("with passion"). A great emotional and physical outlet.

**Crumb, George. *Dream Images*, in *Masters of American Piano Music*, ed. Maurice**

**Hinson. Alfred Publishing Co.** Elegant sonorities, poetic effect. Quotes movingly from Chopin's *Fantaisie-Improvisation* (Crumb marks it, "Musingly, like the gentle caress of a faintly remembered music"). This is the only relatively easy piece in the set *Makrokosmos*, so it is good to have it printed separately. It is written to be played with amplification, but I have it from the composer himself that this is not necessary.

**Dello Joio, Norman. *Piano Sonata No. 1*.**

**Warner Bros.** Mvt. I: Chorale Prelude is dramatic, intense. Mvt. II: Canon. Mvt. III: Capriccio is jazzy with driving rhythms and free range over the keyboard; works well as separate piece. Requires a large hand.

**Dello Joio, Norman. *Piano Sonata No. 3*. Carl**

**Fischer.** The second and fourth movements are short, brilliant pieces, either of which could stand alone.

**Ferguson, Howard. *Five Bagatelles*. Boosey & Hawkes.** Five short pieces: Romantic, intensely dramatic.

**Gershwin, George. *Three Preludes*. Warner.**

These Preludes are justly famous. The second is the easiest technically, but requires a sensitivity to color. One and three are so attractive that students may overcome technical challenges which would defeat them elsewhere.

**Ginastera, Alberto. *Danzas Argentinas*.**

**Durand S.A.** Masterful examples of the fire and pathos of Ginastera's music.



**Ginastera, Alberto. *Twelve American Preludes*. Carl Fischer.** Short, exciting pieces in various styles. Creole Dance; Tribute to Roberto Garcia Morillo; Tribute to Juan Jose Castro; Tribute to Aaron Copland.

**Glanville-Hicks, Peggy. *Prelude for a Pensive Pupil*.** See Hinson, *The Century of Invention*. This brief, angular, lyrical piece is deeply moving.

**Hinson, Maurice, ed. *The Century of Invention: Piano Music of the 20th Century*. European American Music Corp.** A beautifully produced collection presents a wide variety of styles. Includes Hinson's descriptions of each piece and short composer biographies. Especially recommended: Alban Berg, *Klavierstück in B Minor*; Peggy Glanville-Hicks, *Prelude for a Pensive Pupil*; Joseph Schwantner, *Veiled Autumn*; Kurt Weil, *Tango-Ballade*.

**Hoiby, Lee. *Five Preludes*. Plymouth Music Co.** Number two is boisterous, athletic, virtuosic. Plenty of octaves and arpeggios. Number five is also very effective.

**Kodaly, Zoltan. *Nine Piano Pieces*, op. 3. MMP.** Don't expect Bartok! Kodaly had his own distinctive style and these pieces are good examples of it. #3 and 7 particularly rewarding.

**Lees, Benjamin. *Fantasia*. Boosey & Hawkes.** Dramatic juxtaposition of lyrical lines and driving forces. 6 minutes.

**Muczynski, Robert. *Collected Piano Pieces*. G. Schirmer.** The *Six Preludes*, op. 6, are short but challenging, all effective. Flight from *Suite for Piano*, op. 13, has alternating hands playing three-note broken chords, like a game of Tag. To be played *Allegro moderato*, but *Presto* on the repeat! From the same Suite, Vision is by turns mysterious, grandiose, lyrical. Best with a left-hand span of a ninth. Rapid octaves, large chords. Brilliant: exciting to play and to hear.

**Muczynski, Robert. *Maverick Pieces*, op. 37. G. Schirmer.** The two Andantes are beautiful: #2, is tense and dramatic and #6 is lush and expansive. #5's driving 16ths are reminiscent of Ginastera, but the beat is North American.

**Muczynski, Robert. *Seven*, op. 30. G. Schirmer.** All interesting. #4 like a wild scat-song for the piano. A great American sound.

**Piazzolla, Astor. *Estaciones (Seasons)*. Tonos.** Tangos from the master.

**Prokofieff, Sergei. *Six Morceaux*, op. 52. Boosey & Hawkes.** No. 3, Etude; is a toccata-like showpiece—worth the work.

**Prokofieff, Sergei. *Ten Little Pieces*, op. 12. Warner Bros.** Rigaudon; Prelude; Scherzo.

**Rorem, Ned. *Nocturnes*.**

**Scchedrin, Rodion. *Six Pieces For Solo Piano*. MMP.** A good introduction to the music of this important Russian composer. Humoresque, which is to be played "con buffo e elegante" sounds like a lumbering elephant carrying a dainty princess. Irreverent bursts of sound and funny twists and turns. Scherzino is fast and fleeting but not difficult. Scampers around the keyboard but has a laid-back, jazzy feel to it.

**Schoenberg, Arnold. *Sechs Kleine Klavierstücke*, op. 19. MMP.** If you seek 12-tone music, why not go to the source? #2 (very easy), 3, and 4 especially recommended to show a student that music can be very expressive without tonality.

**Schwantner, Joseph. *Veiled Autumn (Kindertodeslied)*.** See Hinson, *Changing Faces*. Delicate, eerily beautiful meditation. Not difficult to play, but requires quiet listening.

**Starer, Robert. *Album for Piano*. MCA/Hal Leonard.** *Five Preludes* and *Prelude and Toccata* are highly expressive and dramatic.

**Turina, Joaquin. *Circus Suite*. Warner Bros.** Wonderfully imaginative and effective pieces. My favorites are Jugglers; Clowns; and Swinging Trapezes.

**Turina, Joaquin. *Dances Ginates*, op. 55. Editions Salabert.** Sacro-Monte is a good example of the rhythmic drive and virtuosic flair that we all love in Spanish music. Requires large hand, octave technique.

**Villa Lobos, Heitor. *Piano Music Of Villa-Lobos. Dover. Ciclo Brasileiro: Dansa do Indio Branco.***

**Weill, Kurt. *Tango-Ballade.*** See Hinson, *The Century of Invention.*

## Advanced

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**Berg, Alban. *Piano Sonata*. Warner Bros.** A masterpiece. Lush harmonies, highly expressive, dramatic.

***The Boosey & Hawkes 20th-Century Piano Collection*. Boosey & Hawkes.** Copland's Three Moods; Arthur Benjamin's Scherzino.

***The Carnegie Hall Millennium Piano Book*. Boosey & Hawkes.** There is no editor listed, but Ursula Oppens contributes notes to each piece and a CD. I haven't tried teaching these yet, but am interested in Frederic Rzewski's *The Days Fly By*, Chen Yi's *Ba Ban*, Louis Andriessen's *Image de Moreau*, and Tan Dun's *Dew-Fall-Drops*.

**Dello Joio, Norman. *Capriccio on the Interval of a Second*. Marks.**

**Ginastera, Alberto. *Suite de Danzas Criollas*. Boosey & Hawkes.** No. 1 is a beautiful slow dance with colorful soft tone clusters and a gentle rocking rhythmic figure in bass. Not difficult, but not for the small hand. The Suite bears a strong resemblance to Ginastera's *Sonata No. 1*.

**Johnson, Hunter. *Sonata*. Theodore Presser.** Improvisatory, blues-influenced style.

**Kodaly, Zoltan. *Marroszek Dances*. Warner Bros.** Smashing theme and variations set. The lyrical sections are deeply affecting, and the Hungarian dances are wild.

**Liebermann, Lowell. *Gargoyles*. Theodore Presser.** Like their namesake, these four pieces are not beautiful, but are dramatic and riveting.

**Poulenc, Francis. *Toccata*. Theodore Presser.** Not that hard to play if you have a left hand with an easy ninth reach, and if you take Poulenc's metronome mark with a grain of salt. Full of the good-natured bombast and sweet melodies characteristic of this witty composer.

**Poulenc, Francis. *Piano-Album*. Editions Salabert.** Recommended: Caprice; Valse—Improvisation sur le Nom de BACH; Reve from *Feuillets d'Album*; Intermezzo in C Major; Presto in Bb.

**Prokofieff, Sergei. *Piano Solos*. Kalmus.** In vol. 1, *Suggestion Diabolique*, op. 4, no. 4 is demonic, driving, thrilling. *Toccata*, op. 11 is very difficult, but very exciting.

**Prokofieff, Sergei. *Complete Sonatas*. Alfred, Warner Bros, Boosey & Hawkes.** The following seem to work best with (advanced) students: *Sonata No. 1*; *Sonata No. 2*, mvts. 1, 2, and 4; *Sonata No. 3*; *Sonata No. 4*, 3rd mvt; *Sonata No. 6*, 4th mvt; *Sonata No. 7*, all mvts.

**Rochberg, George. *Carnival Music*. Theodore Presser.** Reminds me of Ives: though it's less complex in texture, it is full of rowdy good times and Americana. Toccata-Rag is smashing.

**Rzewski, Frederic. *North American Ballads*. Zen-on Music, Ltd.** Lush, Ivesian pieces. Sideshow; Dreadful Memories; Which Side Are You On.

**Vine, C. *Sonata*. Chester.**

**Villa Lobos, Heitor. *Piano Music of Villa Lobos*. Dover.** *Suite Floral*: Summer Idyll; Alegria na Horta. There are two of the most effective examples of Villa Lobos' dense harmonization of Brazilian folk melodies. Alegria is rhythmically delightful. A kind of Latin American Impressionism.