

New Music for Undergraduate Piano Students

Annotated Bibliography

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Individual pieces

Abrahamsen, Hans. *In Memoriam Luigi Nono*. Copenhagen: Edition Wilhelm Hansen, 1991.

Hans Abrahamsen is a Danish composer associated with the New Simplicity in the 1960s in whose works it is often possible to perceive a snowy or frosty aspect. The work is in adagissimo in 3/8 meter with dynamics marked “pianissimo sempre.” The piece is in AA form, with each having twenty-four measures. The harmony consists mostly of major and minor triads and tetrachords, with eventual added sevenths. The main challenges are the unconventional use of tonal chords, leaps between chords, and creating phrasing amidst rests.

Antunes, Jorge. *Carimbozino da Helena*. Brasília, Brazil: Sistrum Edições Musicais Ltda., 2007.

_____. *Chorinho da Maria Inês*. Brasília, Brazil: Sistrum Edições Musicais Ltda., 2002.

_____. *La Seconde Chute*. Brasília, Brazil: Sistrum Edições Musicais Ltda., 2005.

_____. *Modinha do Amaral*. Brasília, Brazil: Sistrum Edições Musicais Ltda., 2010.

_____. *Valsina da Eudóxia*. Brasília, Brazil: Sistrum Edições Musicais Ltda., 2007

Jorge Antunes is a Brazilian composer known for his work with electroacoustic music but who has written instrumental music as well. The piano pieces listed here are usually written in ABC

or ABCD form, with one containing an A' part as the last section. The composer relies heavily on syncopated rhythms and modal or atonal harmonic language. Most of them contain extended techniques or slight preparation of the piano and combine standard, graphic, and spatial notation.

Bolcom, William. *Seven Easy Piano Pieces*. New York: Edward B. Marks Music Company, 2009.

William Bolcom is an American Pulitzer Prize and Grammy Award-winner, who has written pieces in both contemporary and popular styles. The group of pieces consists of three waltzes entitled Pussycat Waltz No. 1 – No. 3, with two pieces between each waltz. The first three and the seventh pieces are easier, with range within four octaves in the central register of the piano and rhythms using eighth notes as the smallest unit in melody and accompaniment pattern. The next three pieces are more difficult, with thirty-second notes, octave transpositions, and counterpoint patterns.

Cage, John. *Music for Marcel Duchamp*. New York: Henmar Press Inc., 1947.

In this piece for prepared piano, only nine preparations are used, with materials consisting of weather stripping, a piece of rubber, and a bolt. The score is written in standard notation on a single C clef. The pitch material used is limited to the nine prepared pitches. As the rhythms used consist of quarter notes and eighth notes, technical challenges consist of preparing the piano and becoming accustomed to how to produce the desired tone quality on the modified instrument.

Cerrone, Christopher. *Hoyt Schermerhorn, for piano and electronics*. New York: Outburst-Inburst Musics, 2010.

Christopher Cerrone is an American composer of instrumental, vocal, and electroacoustic works. The score for this piece is written in standard notation, except for the use of spatial and time

notation to indicate durations for most of the notes. Technical challenges consist of large-interval chords in the left hand and performing with electronics. This piece requires the use of two microphones, a Macintosh computer with MAX/MSP, and audio interface, two loudspeakers, and a midi foot pedal for activating the electronics.

Glass, Philip. *Opening*. Bryn Mawr, PA: Dunvagen Music Publishers, Inc., 1982

The score is in standard notation and divided into five four-measure segments with repeats and one eight measure segment with “D.C. twice” marking. The range is limited to a ninth below and a minor tenth above middle C, within which the left hand plays pairs of eighth-notes and the right hand plays triplets. There is only one dynamic marking on the last page indicating piano subito. Technical challenges include keeping both hands aligned at the 116-bpm tempo and playing duple hemiolas with the right-hand triplets against.

Ligeti, György. *Trois Bagatelles*. Mainz, Germany: Schott, 1961.

Each bagatelle consists of a single measure in standard notation, with rests and expressive markings. Only the first of them has a note – a C#2 – and tempo markings. An optional fourth bagatelle is added for an encore. Change from one movement to the next is indicated by turning each page. The interpretative challenge lies in performing the silent measures within the expressive parameters.

Pärt, Arvo. *Für Alina*. Vienna: Universal Edition, 1976.

In this piece Arvo Pärt employs for the first time his technique of Tintinnabuli. The right hand consists of mostly diatonic melodies in the right hand and accompanying notes in the left hand derived from the harmonic series of bells. Notation consists of whole notes and stemless quarter

notes. The technical challenges include maintaining a meditative, bell-like atmosphere while also connecting the notes in the melodic phrases.

_____. *Für Anna Maria*. Vienna: Universal Edition, 2006.

In this piece the right hand plays mostly arpeggios in eighth notes while the left hand plays perfect fourths or fifths in half notes. The technical consist mostly of the wide arpeggios for the right hand.

Santoro, Claudio. *Intermitências I*. Paris: Editions Jobert, 1971.

The piece displays intensive use of extended techniques such as pizzicato, added materials on the strings, clusters, and fingernail glissandi, as well as playing on the keyboard. The score combines graphic and standard notations. Pitches are notated on staves and durations are notated using standard notation combined with spatial notation supplemented in the second and third pages by markings of the number of seconds. Technical challenges include performance of extended techniques, transitions between inside of the instrument and the keyboard, and creation of long silences.

Collections

***Bravo Brazil! Book 2*, ed. David and Martha Appleby. San Diego: Kjos West, 1984.**

A collection of intermediate level works by the twentieth century Brazilian composers Heitor Villa-Lobos, Osvaldo Lacerda, Claudio Santoro, Camargo Guarnieri, and Marlos Nobre. The pieces are grounded in Brazilian heritage, with syncopated rhythms and counterpoint. Marlos Nobre's *Capoeira* is of particular interest for his use of wrist and knuckles to alternate black and white-key clusters in addition to knocking on the wood of the instrument.

***Changing Faces: New Piano Works*, ed. Corey Field. Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: European American Music Corporation, 1987.**

A collection of contemporary works by seven American composers. Harmonic language varies from triadic based to octatonic and tritone based pieces with styles varying from impressionistic to minimalist. Challenges include playing extreme dynamic and meter changes. Styles range from slow and melancholic to fast and rhythmic.

***Dances of Our Time: A Collection of New Pieces for Piano*. Mainz, Germany: Schott Music, 2012.**

A collection of works commissioned from composers from 26 countries, with the unifying theme of dance. The pieces are written in a wide variety of styles and difficulty ranges from easy to difficult. Most of the scores are in standard notation, except for the occasional notation for clusters or glissandi on the strings.

Guarnieri, Camargo. *Momentos*. São Paulo: Ricordi Brasileira S/A, 1989.

A collection of ten short pieces by the Brazilian composer, created with the intent of expressing emotional qualities of Brazilian serenades. The harmonic language is often modal, using folklore scales, and counterpoint is present throughout.

***Piano Music of Africa and the African Diaspora*, ed. William H. Chapman Nyaho. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.**

A five-volume compilation of works by composers from the African continent or of African descent. The works in the final three volumes, which are levelled early advanced and advanced,

are of various styles, using standard notation and very light extended techniques, such as snapping fingers and speaking.

***Spectrum: 20 Contemporary Works for Solo Piano*, ed. Thalia Myers. London: Caligraving Ltd., 1996.**

***Spectrum 2: 30 Miniatures for Solo Piano*, ed. Thalia Myers. London: Caligraving Ltd., 1999.**

***Spectrum 3: An International Collection of 25 Pieces for Solo Piano*, ed. Thalia Myers. London: Caligraving Ltd., 2001.**

***Spectrum 4: An International Collections of 66 Miniatures for Solo Piano*, ed. Thalia Myers. London: Caligraving Ltd., 2010.**

***Spectrum 5: 15 Contemporary Pieces for Solo Piano*, ed. Thalia Myers. London: Caligraving Ltd., 2016.**

***Spectrum for Piano Duet: 21 Contemporary Pieces*, ed. Thalia Myers. London: Caligraving Ltd., 2012.**

Collections of short works by composers of various nationalities. Contain pieces with standard and non-standard notation, as well as pieces for piano and tape and extended techniques.

Difficulty levels range from easy to early advanced.

***The 20th Century Upper Elementary Level: 30 Pieces by Bartók, Bolcom, Dello Joio, Kabalevsky, Schostakovich, and Others in Progressive Order*, ed. Richard Walters. New York: G. Shirmer Inc., 2015.**

A collection of works by the composers referenced in the title. The works are short, easy pieces, appropriate for use with secondary piano students. Includes works from Bolcom's *Monsterpieces*, and challenges include overlapping hand placement, use of full range of the keyboard, and pedaling.

12 x 11, ed. Maurice Hinson. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Hinshaw Music, 1979.

A collection of works by eleven American composers. Styles vary from romantic to post-serial techniques. The pieces vary in length from one-page to twelve-page works. Most of the scores use standard notation, with the major exception being Crumb's *Dream Images* from *Makrokosmos I*, which makes use of an unusual disposition of staves. Technical challenges include extreme dynamic ranges, wide leaps, and palm and arm clusters.

Waltzes by 25 Contemporary Composers, ed. Robert Helps and Robert Moran. New York: C.F. Peters, 1978.

Collection of waltzes by twenty-five composers. The works are relatively short, with styles varying from minimalism to serialism. Technical challenges include extended techniques, such as speaking and silently depressed keys. The works included use standard notation, except for Cage's *49 Waltzes for the Five Bouroughs*. Despite challenges that may arise from the contemporary harmonic language, most pieces are short enough for an undergraduate pianist to work on without getting discouraged.

Pedagogical Approaches

Sola, Ramírez S., Fernández, Ignacio T., Gutiérrez, María I. G., Villegas, Fernando M., García, Juan Carlos P., and Rodríguez, Lúcia A. Cuaderno de Iniciación Al Piano Contemporáneo. Sevilla: Self-published, 2009.

This is a method book in Spanish, with short pieces distributed among four levels of increasing difficulty. In this collection, the student is introduced to piano techniques and score notations used in contemporary music, such as clusters, silently depressed keys, string glissandi, and prepared piano, as well as chance music.

Kase, Sonoko. *Introduktion till nya spelsätt – Klang i Klaveret Pianoskola*. Stockholm, Sweden: Eriks Nothandel AB, 1988.

Method book in Danish for using clusters to teach young students the gestures and movements that are found in standard repertoire. The method is inspired by the use of clusters in Henry Cowell's *Three Irish Legends* and György Kurtag's *Játékok*.

Scholarly Works

Beard, Scott. "Review of *Composer Showcase: Miniatures in Style, Six Original Piano Solos in Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Impressionist, and Contemporary Styles*, by Mona Rejino." *American Music Teacher* 65, no. 3 (2015/2016): 47-48.

This is a review of a collection of works released by the Hal Leonard Corporation for piano students at the early-intermediate to intermediate level. The author critiques the creation of works written in Baroque style, arguing that these compositions do not add significantly to the repertoire, as students might just as easily study works by Bach. Emphasis is given to the significance of the pieces written in Romantic style, and the author praises their adequacy as recital or sight-reading pieces for piano students.

Clark, Adam. "Review of *Easy Contemporary Pieces for Solo Piano*, by various composers." *American Music Teacher* 67, no. 2 (2017): 44-46.

In this review, Clark critiques a collection of easy contemporary pieces for piano. Some shortcomings he points out are the lack of a section with information about the composers, the generalized use of the term “contemporary” (as some of the composers were no longer living at the time of publication, and mislabeling of the intermediate-level pieces as “easy.”) However, he praises the quality of the pieces and how appealing they are.

Costa, Carlos. “Pedagogical Goals Addressed in Published Intermediate Piano Repertoire Composed by Brazilians from 1950 to 1990: A Selected Annotated Bibliography,” DMA dissertation. University of Georgia at Athens, 2002.

In this thesis, Costa presents an annotated bibliography of Brazilian twentieth-century piano works at the intermediate level. He argues that exposure to the rhythms, melodies, and harmonies that are typical of Brazilian music can help enrich and broaden a piano student’s musical experience. In the main body of the document, he categorizes the repertoire by pedagogical goal, and at the end, provides an appendix of works as well as a table identifying the main characteristics of each piece.

Hinkley, Brian. “Transcending the Keyboard: The Development of Non-Traditional Piano Techniques.” *Music: Student Scholarship and Creative Works*, 2017.
<https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/muscstudent/3>

In this extended article, Hinkley analyzes how Henry Cowell, George Crumb, and Moritz Eggert explored extended piano techniques in their works. He subdivides these techniques into the categories of techniques performed on the keyboard, inside the piano, the use of foreign objects, choreography and use of other instruments. Works with electronics are excluded from the scope of the document. Finally, the author compares how the composers studied use similar techniques.

Johnson, Jessica. “Exploring New Sounds: Contemporary Performance Techniques for the Pre-College Student.” *American Music Teacher* 54, no. 5 (2005): 29-34.

In this article, Jessica Johnson advocates the use of contemporary repertoire to train pre-college piano students in the skills they will need when learning contemporary music. She suggests works that will help the students learn skills such as changing articulation, register, and dynamics quickly, play music with pointillistic texture, perform unusual note groupings and intervals, prepare a piano, and read asymmetrical meters and spatial notation. She justifies advocating for young pianists playing New Music by pointing out that students will live their lives within the twenty-first century and that supplementing standard repertoire with a contemporary one will provide them with the skills they will need for playing the music of their time.

Prynn, Gabriel. “Performing New Music.” *American Music Teacher* 67, no. 5 (2018): 16-20.

In this article, the author addresses the challenge of executing complex rhythms, so common in post-1950 repertoire. To this, he proposes several strategies. The first is to regroup subdivisions of rhythms such as quintuplets. Another is to re-bar measures that change meter. Finally, he suggests writing in the parts of other instruments in chamber music to serve as cues, as well as using a metronome and having a member of the group occasionally listen to the ensemble following the score or serve as “conductor.”

Richmond, Kevin David. “Non-Traditional Notation and Techniques in Student Piano Repertoire,” DMA dissertation. The University of Texas at Austin, 2003.

In this doctoral treatise, Richmond describes repertoire for piano students at the beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. Each chapter deals with challenges such as clusters, sympathetic vibrations, unmeasured and graphic notation, and improvisation found in piano

works for each of student level. He argues that by learning contemporary piano vocabulary from the first years of instruction prepares the student for the challenges that appear in professional contemporary repertoire. Additionally, this treatise provides appendixes containing a vast list of compositions divided by grade level.

Ridgway, Paul. "Selected Contemporary Piano Works for Intermediate Students."

American Music Teacher 33, no. 5 (1984): 22.

In this article, Ridgway provides a list of contemporary works for piano students at the intermediate level. He points out that piano teachers often neglect twentieth-century pieces, perhaps due to a dislike for the idiom or a fear that their students might not enjoy it. He argues that, because young students have not yet developed strong musical preferences, teachers should provide them with opportunities to become acquainted with this repertoire. Some reasons he proposes are that many such pieces have been written as study pieces that approach technical and musical problems (as do works from standard repertoire) as well as the growing number of institutions that require contemporary pieces for auditions.

Vaes, Luk. "Extended Piano Techniques: In Theory, History, and Performance Practice."

PhD dissertation. Universiteit Leiden, Netherlands, 2009.

In this dissertation, Vaes considers definitions of extended techniques and categorizes them into "degrees of improperness," classifying them as low, medium, and high-grade extensions. He then identifies individual techniques in keyboard repertoire ranging from as early as the 1700s to the twenty-first century. In addition, he provides appendixes for preparations for Cage's *Sonatas and Interludes* and of measurements of piano models current at the time of publication.

Vouvaris, Patros. "44 Children's Pieces on Greek Melodies by Yannis Constantinidis: A Masterpiece of *Mikrokosmic* Proportions." *American Music Teacher* 54, no. 6 (2005): 41-45, 125.

In this article, Vouvaris advocates for the use of Constantinidis's collection of children's pieces in piano pedagogy. After giving a brief outline of the composer's career, output, and compositional style, Vouvaris writes about the forty-four-piece collection. He argues that the composer's use of Greek melodies allows young students to become familiar with nonfunctional harmony, dissonance, and complex rhythmic vocabulary at an early age.

General References

Dubal, David. *The Art of the Piano: Its Performers, Literature, and Recordings*. Pompton Plains, New Jersey: Amadeus Press, 2004.

Magrath, Jane. *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature: An Invaluable Resource of Piano Literature from Baroque through Contemporary Periods for Teachers, Students, and Performers*. Van Nuys, California: Alfred Publishing Co., 1995.

Hinson, Maurice, and Wesley Roberts. *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2014.

Gandelman, Saloméa. *36 Compositores Brasileiros: Obras Para Piano (1950-1988)*. Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará, 1997.