

**ARCTIC VOICES****Piano Solos**

by Susan Griesdale

**Red Leaf Pianoworks**

(Early Intermediate to Early Advanced)

Red Leaf Pianoworks has published a beautiful collection here. It is gift giving material! The Cover art is stunning: Arctic Sunset Polar Bear by the Alaskan Master Artist, Bob Patterson. If you, like me, have never visited the north, this striking cover will help! Susan Griesdale's *Dreamcatcher* and *Lavender Dreams* have been popular in my studio so I was delighted when I got her new collection to review.

Susan Griesdale's Preface describes concisely what this book offers better than I ever could so I quote: "A wide palate of musical material awaits, from the alluring, but stark mood of *Arctic Voices*, the extreme sadness of *Polar Bear's Lament*, the high energy percussive vitality of *Drum Dance*, the playful frolicking of the *Arctic Fox*, the busy outdoor fun of *Toques and Parkas*, an afternoon of adventure for our *Arctic Wolf*, the exciting "splash" of the northern lights in *Dancing Skies*, the staid forever feeling of *Inukshuk*, to the wild crashing dissonances of *Glaciers*." Performance notes are provided for each piece.

If you are a composition teacher, and give your students a project of using a chosen interval to create as many moods as possible, consider using this collection to illustrate what can be done. The open 5<sup>th</sup> is used to explore extreme registers, contrasting dynamics, and an abundance of moods and emotions.

Judith Ammann - Alberta

**EXPLORING PIANO CLASSICS****Level 5 - A Masterwork Method****for the Developing Pianist****Repertoire album & Technique book**

Nancy Bachus

**Alfred Publishing**

The Exploring Piano Classics series is very similar to the RCM series here in Canada. Included are works from five eras, Baroque to Modern. The books are very modestly priced at \$21.00USD for the pair of books. A CD of the repertoire is included as well. What makes these book stand "head and shoulders" above the rest is the supporting material. The technical aspects of the repertoire are all cross-referenced with the Technique book. The technical exercises are all greatly varied and should make the subject interesting to the pupil. The technique book contains very detailed instructions. I've never seen such a comprehensive book tied directly to repertoire. The pedagogical helps are extensive and would be a very valuable resource to a new teacher of piano and an excellent refresher to the experienced one. The repertoire album places a great deal of applicable information at the fingertips of the student and teacher. This includes background information of all sorts including: composer history, definitions of dance types, historic paintings and even historic cartoons! The books are very well thought out. They contain a wide variety of keys, time signatures and tempi. A student who completes these books would have a thorough understanding of all of the elements of grade 5.

Andrew Harbridge - Ontario

**TREASURES****Seven Pieces for Piano Solo**

by Eugenie Rocherolle

**Hal•Leonard Publishing**

(Late Elementary/Early Intermediate)

Eugenie Rocherolle published her first piano solo collection in 1978 – before many of you were born but her Christmas arrangements and easy listening style may already be part of your library. Hal Leonard publisher her TREASURES in 2012. With titles like *Chatterbox*, *A Faded Letter* and *Giggles and Gossip*, you know you will have some differing options with pleasant sounds and pictures to paint with music. The chosen keys are A minor and the Major keys of C, G, and D.

*Chatterbox* - is bouncy with 2 note phrases, and would be a fun way to study 8<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> notes. *A Faded Letter* - reflective, lounge music using broken LH chords moving from 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> under a gentle melody in the RH. *Giggles and Gossip* - Well titled! Lots of staccato minor 2nds for 2 pages of easy Big Note fun. *Pavane* - Expressive and dignified. RH crosses over; showy but not difficult. *Prairie Song* - is pensive, and easy listening - not cowboy. The LH needs to be able to play from the tonic to the dominant and up to the 10<sup>th</sup> above tonic smoothly...like in lots of Pop music. *Saddle Up* - this horse is doing an easy trot. *6<sup>th</sup> Sense* - reminded me of Study in C by Duvornoy in the Grade 4 RCM Studies.

Judith Ammann - Alberta

