

FEDERATION FAVORITES**Book 2****FJH Music**

Many of the composers in this edition have been included in other publications and are quite popular with most teachers. The National Federation of Music Clubs has a long and distinguished history in the US.

The compositions share common “C major” signatures with two exceptions: *Ghost Waltz* by Edwin McLean in e minor and *Loco-Motive* by Melody Bober in c minor. Accidentals are common to many of the other renditions. Time signatures are in simple time; either three four or four four. *Rabbits in the Snow* by Mary Sallee is the only composition asking for any reach or triad playing. The art work on the cover will certainly appeal to your students and the copy is beautifully clean and easy to read. Labeled for Elementary/Late Elementary students, I believe most of our elementary Canadian students would find these very accessible and late elementary students could enjoy them as quick studies or sight reading challenges. The style is varied throughout and the titles descriptive and interesting. *First Light* by Mary Leaf depicting a Native American Flute and *Thundering Drums* by Anita Brandon illustrate the versatility of an acoustical piano. Our piano can be a “magic box”, which can transport our players to become story tellers.

Bettijo Smith - Alberta

PIANO POEMS**Susan Griesdale****RedLeaf Pianoworks**

Piano Poems contains mildly contemporary pieces in which talented Canadian Composer Susan Griesdale invites the musician to “unwind and let the music soothe you”. These rich hallow calm pieces create a nostalgic, peaceful mood, beautifully enhanced with invaluable Program Notes. Each piece presents a variety of musical and technical challenges and Griesdale identifies strategies, to enhance the efficiency and accuracy of each piece. Griesdale says she modeled the book after the Romantic need for long lines, careful balance and dynamics to train the intermediate player for the Romantic repertoire to come. Griesdale shows a very sensitive style of composition as she presents specific scenes or moods in our minds. With pieces entitled *Remembering You* and *Forgotten*, Griesdale links sound with expression. The third piece *Lavender Dreams*, in the tricky key of f minor, has the pianist enjoying the use of a seamless line between the hands. The most challenging piece *Forgotten* has the pianist in g# minor with an inner melodic line to contend with. *After the Rain* is an improvisational opportunity with a given scale over a LH chordal accompaniment. There are sound clips available at the composer’s website: www.susangriesdale.com. The quiet pieces of this collection contain extra ritardandi, softer dynamics, and are full of upper register ledger lines, adding to the serenity of this musically rewarding and expressive style. This is an ideal book for someone who plays piano for pleasure and enjoys peaceful sensitive playing.

Sarah Lawton - Ontario

Premier Piano Course**Masterworks Books 3 – 6****Gayle Kowalchuk & E.L. Lancaster
Alfred Publishing**

Wow! What an awesome collection of music in their original form! As I played through the books I discovered not only standard repertoire we’re accustomed to in the Royal Conservatory repertoire books but some wonderful compositions from less well known composers. These books contain music from Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and 20th century eras. The pieces in the books correlate page by page with the materials in their corresponding Lesson books. I like the fact that terms or symbols students are not familiar with are defined in footnotes or parentheses. Of particular interest are the Premier Performer suggestions at the bottom of the pages to enhance performance skills and musical understanding. A great compliment to these books are the CDs that feature 2 tracks of each selection. One at performance tempo and the second at a slower practice tempo.

The creators of the Premier Piano Course have done such a superb job of covering every style of music and making the study of music interesting. Now with these Masterworks to support the program it makes it very well rounded. Because this is standard repertoire it would work well with any other piano method. These books could be used for review to add a little more depth to the level or alongside the Lesson book. These books were a pleasure to review!

Jean Ritter - British Columbia