

NEW MATERIALS REVIEWS

Heather Morris

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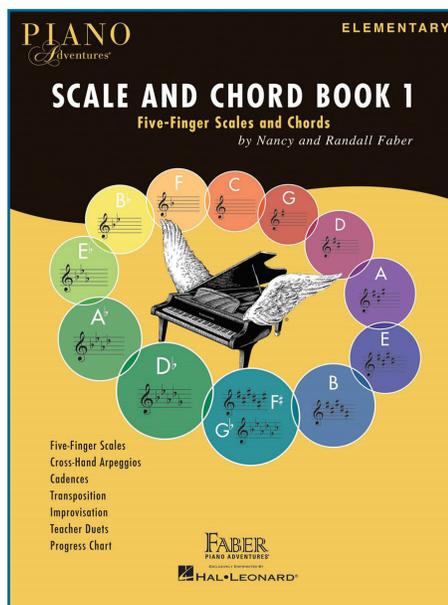
iano Adventures Scale and Chord Book 1
by Nancy and Randall Faber, published by Hal Leonard.

This summer I was faced with many students who had signed up to continue lessons during the summer but hadn't practiced because their week had very busy. They told me, "Well, my grandma came to stay..." "I've had so many sleepovers," or "Science camp was great fun..." I sought through my library to find an engaging book that we could utilize in our lessons. I decided to use "Piano Adventures Scale and Chord Book 1," by Nancy and Randall Faber, published by Hal Leonard. The assignments are short enough to be completed in one lesson. They also teach skills that students might be eager to show off to their parents when they got home.

All major and minor 5-finger scales are presented along with cross-hand arpeggios, and primary chords. Many of my students

loved to fill in the Progress Chart, which also doubles as a Table of Contents for the opening double page. There's plenty of room for stickers on the chart - always a plus in my book. Engaging teacher duets for each key are used for the scale exercises and contain jazz elements that many students enjoy. Cross-hand arpeggios using the damper pedal were a big hit with many students. Improvisation activities

in each hand position feature creative prompts to inspire imagery, character, and tempo, such as: "Imagine hiking on a sunny day" and "Imagine a starry night." These ideas had my students beginning to think about creating moods rather than just playing notes. Many of them drew pictures to go with their improvisations. Nine short pieces are included for transposition into all 12 keys and is a useful resource for students entering the National



Guild exams. So, I hope you won't be put off by the somewhat daunting, rather pedantic title. This book can be fun!

The Fabers are planning to bring out book two in the spring of 2015.

**Play it Again –
An Amateur against the Impossible
Alan Rusbridger**

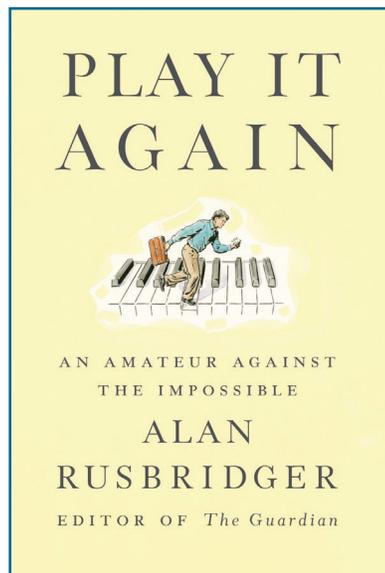
An adult student of mine brought a hefty book into a lesson and asked if I would like to borrow it. It took its place at the bottom of my "must read" pile, but a couple of months later I found myself online at Amazon, eager to purchase my own copy. At its bare bones, *Play it Again* is the story of a man in his early fifties, returning to the piano, giving himself exactly one year to learn Chopin's Ballade No. 1, and then playing it in a public recital.

Rusbridger writes supremely well, his sentences are energetic, and his description of taming this formidable beast of a composition is passionate. He is none other than the editor of the Guardian, and as such, his life is lived in a 24-hour cycle of breaking news, complex editorial decisions such as those

involving WikiLeaks, the Arab Spring, the revelations about the phone hacking at News of the World and the death of Osama Bin Laden. Faced with such a hectic life lived at a frenetic pace, Rusbridger sets himself the task of carving out twenty minutes per day for practicing one of the most challenging pieces of the Romantic repertoire.

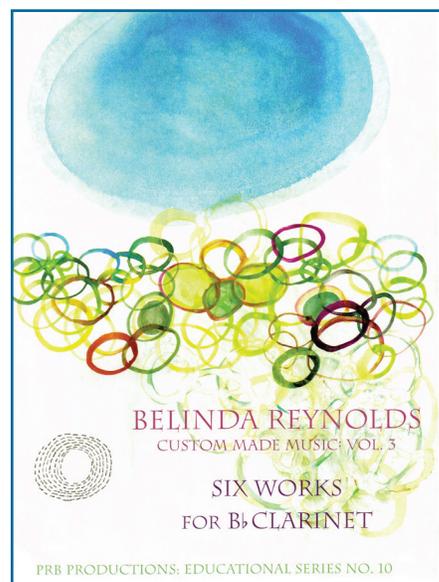
The Ballad demands not only finger pyrotechnics, but also depths of emotional understanding. For helpful hints on learning this piece, Rusbridger secures the opinions of the best people in the piano business: Richard Goode, Stephen Hough, and Murray Perahia to name but a few. He enlightens us as to how some of the greatest teachers in the world disagree on the pedaling in the first measure, how some focus on fingerings and others focus on the music, how some recommend first learning the technical aspects and second

adding in the musical expression, while others believe the two factors must be learned simultaneously. Pianists will appreciate that Rusbridger includes the score, which includes his fingerings and the comments of his teachers. In addition, who resist a book with the sentence: "I hosted a little dinner... and sat next to Hugh Grant...?"

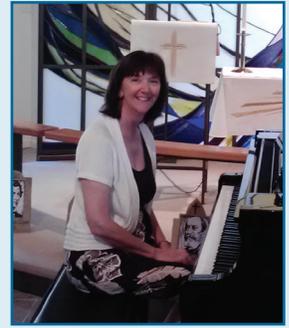


**Six Works for Bb Clarinet: Custom Made Music, Volume 3, 2013,
by Belinda Reynolds
Published by PRB productions:
prbmusic.com**

The impetus for this series is what composer/educator Belinda Reynolds sees as a lack of repertoire for serious instrumentalists who are not yet at the professional level. Reynolds states, "These days, classical music composers are composing almost exclusively for virtuosos and professional musicians, but that hasn't always been the case. From Bach to Bartok, there's a history and tradition of composers writing for younger players and beginners." Called "Custom Made Music," the series is a collection of instrumental books that focus on new music, tailored to explore the technical challenges needed to develop facility as a student advances in the instrument's repertoire. This



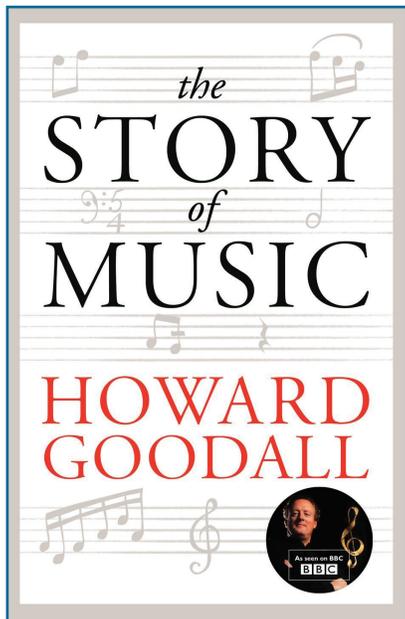
Born and raised in England, Heather J. Morris received her degrees from the universities of Sheffield and Durham. She currently teaches piano, clarinet, theory and composition and writes classical music reviews for the Santa Cruz Sentinel. She is a member of ASCAP and has written orchestral, symphonic band, chamber, and piano works.



particular book features two solos, two clarinet duets and two pieces for clarinet and piano. Each work addresses a particular technical element such as syncopation, extremities of range or staccato, and as such can be considered etudes. The musical style and form are based on modal scales from which rhythmic, harmonic or melodic patterns are gradually transformed in a manner associated with the Minimalist style. Indeed, #4, "Angles," sounds very much like the music of Philip Glass. A companion CD features each piece, and several tracks feature either clarinet 1 or clarinet 2 or piano only, making this a very useful practicing tool. Reynolds is the director of HeShe Music in San Francisco, a private studio that teaches composition and piano to both beginners and professionals. The works are edited by another

California resident, Jeff Anderle, who teaches bass clarinet at San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Other books by Reynolds include "12 pieces for Piano Duet" and "10 pieces for Solo Piano," both with accompanying CDs.

My Story of Music
By Howard Goodall (DVD series)
Reviewed by Heather Morris



"Music has become a massive global phenomenon so it's hard for us today to comprehend that in centuries gone by people could go for weeks without hearing any music at all. Even in the nineteenth century you might hear your favorite symphony four or times in your whole lifetime." So begins "My Story of Music" by Howard Goodall, a very informative six-part history of music by BBC that is funny, witty, and totally engaging. Goodall was appointed

Commander of the Order of the British Empire for services to music education in the 2011 New Year Honors. Over the last 15 years, Goodall has presented six award-winning series of television programs on musical theory and history. What

I find particularly interesting in these voyages of musical exploration is Goodall's style of presentation. There are tricks of the camera and fascinating lighting. The studio sets are dynamic and GIFS (Graphics Interchange Format, i.e., computer graphic images) abound. The series is eclectic and Goodall comes out with quips such as Monteverdi, Mantovani, Motown, Mozart, Machaut and mashup.

The series begins with music in the caves in Southern France. Goodall says that these prehistoric wall paintings are most prolific at the exact points of highest resonant frequency. One could say cave music was the earliest form of GPS!

Highly sought out as a guest speaker, in June of 2014 Goodall gave a speech entitled "what future now for music in schools?" I highly recommend this series. It is found at:

http://www.howardgoodall.co.uk/wpcontent/uploads/Some_thoughts_on_the_future_of_classroom_music_TEXT_VERSION.pdf

Goodall's website will give you a list of all his series, along with his compositions and links to his many and varied articles: <http://www.howardgoodall.co.uk>. 🎵