

brilliant collection of mostly originals are a tune written for the outdoor wedding of Stadler's sister, as well as a number of tunes inspired by various European festivals. "Dance of the Sandpiper" has a separate arrangement for pedal harp, all the other selections can be played on either instrument. The tunes feature harmonics, rolled chords, *pres de la table*, grace notes and lever slides. Lever changes are clearly marked and helpful fingerings are included. There are no chord symbols. Some tunes have syncopated rhythms, one has several meter changes, and another is in 5/4. In addition to the syncopated rhythms, "Monika's Blues" is to be played with a swing feel and has rhythmic muffles and lever slides. Also introduced is the "lever kick," a way of note bending, very fun and unique! Any of these selections can be used as concert/recital material and several are also appropriate as a wedding prelude, in church or as background music. This collection raises the bar for lever harp material, with ideal challenges for intermediate to advanced players. I will probably never leave home without it! D.G.V.

RATATOUILLE, Various pieces for harp. Clemens Krijer, arr. Nienke van Leiden. Beeldend Componist, 2008, \$29.95 with CD.

This unique book from Holland features fifteen tunes, such as "Pirouette," "Spain," and "Harptude," divided into sections called Appetizers, Main Courses, and Desserts. Appropriate for advanced beginners through intermediate players, each tune is accompanied by a descriptive story or explanation of the style (in Dutch and English) and delightful, complementary artwork. The selections feature a variety of techniques, including rolled chords, syncopation, a swing feel, P.D.L.T. and triplets. The tunes vary from no lever changes to several clearly marked changes (pedal changes are also easy to read). Helpful

fingerings are included but no chord symbols. The nineteen-track companion CD lets you hear each selection played as a harp solo. Four tunes have a "Karaoke" feature: you can listen to them with the harp part or you can play with the CD. This one-of-a-kind collection could be used to learn new rhythms and styles, and for recitals and programs. D.G.V.

Chamber Music

MY FIRST PROGRESSIVE DUETS (vn, va, vc, db). Arr./composed Doris Gazda and Larry Clark. Carl Fisher, 2009, each \$9.95.

This is the first of a series of Gazda and Clark's *Progressive Duets*. This book provides beginning to intermediate string players opportunities to collaborate in multiple instrumental combinations, and all three volumes of duets can be used in a class or chamber music setting. Much of the repertoire is based in folk and traditional music, but some classical and original compositions are also included. As titled, the music progresses in difficulty throughout the book. Most pieces are in simple meters, and in keys of C, G, D and F major. The parts are very equal in difficulty. These duos are great for introducing young string players to chamber music, and are also useful for sight reading practice in your studio or classroom. A.C.F.

POP SONGS FROM THE TWILIGHT SAGA (string quartet).

"Shooting the Moon" (OK Go), Damian J. Julash, Jr. and Timothy Nordwind; "Slow Life" (Grizzly Bear), Christopher Bear, Edward F. Droste, Christopher Michael Taylor, and Daniel Rossen; arr. Eric Gorfain. String Letter Publishing, 2010, score/parts \$20.99.

With these two arrangements of songs featured in the recent *Twilight: New Moon* movie, Gorfain captures the groove of their indie rock origin

while providing advanced high school students with a chance to improve their rhythm and ensemble skills. "Shooting the Moon" zips along in 6/8. The composer indicates to give a swing to sixteenth notes. Repetitive rhythmic patterns provide a great opportunity for students to develop a strong sense of group pulse, as well as work on matching articulations. Structured in five sections of varying textures, "Shooting the Moon" gives students an opportunity to use ponticello and timed glissandi techniques. All parts feature double stops that most early advanced players could navigate easily. The first violin part stays in third position for much of the work, moving into fourth and fifth positions at times. "Slow Life" moves at a slower pace than "Shooting the Moon" but features the same rhythmic and textural points of interest. Played at a "lazily groovy" tempo, the introduction requires the students to set an offbeat groove over which the cello plays a slinky syncopated melody. This texture alternates with a more rhythmically varied section featuring spiccato sixteenth notes in the first and second violin parts while the other instruments riff on the first violin's "hazily dreamy" melody. The melodic lines are legato and dovetail in a manner that will help the group develop balance and blending skills. First and second violinists need to be able to navigate up to fifth position for this work. L.T.

RAGTIME FIDDLELING TUNES.

O'CAROLAN FIDDLE TUNES.

SWEDISH FIDDLE TUNES.

(2 vn, 2 va, 2 vc, 2 db, 2 mandolins). Compiled/arr. Deborah Greenblatt. Greenblatt & Seay, 2009, each \$15.

Ragtime and *O'Carolan* are two more great compilations of approximately two dozen older and newer fiddling duets. The collection of forty-nine traditional Swedish tunes is an excellent addition to music of other cultures. These

tunes are largely dance-based, including the polka, march, waltz, schottische, and music for weddings. The tunes in each volume are arranged in two parts, with the melody on the top part. All tunes are in the same key for each instrument, so any combination of instruments can play together. Chords are indicated above the stave, facilitating added accompaniment. As with Greenblatt's other books, these are laid out to avoid page turns. The spiral binding allows you to read the flattened pages on a stand. It might be helpful if this well-edited collection included phonetic pronunciation help for some of the Swedish tune titles. These collections are highly recommended as good repertoire for any studio and curriculum. We look forward to the next publications from this accomplished musician and arranger. B.M., J.F.R.

TANGO "Dorothea" (string quartet). Tomislav Butorac. Ice-Land Music, Edition Butorac, München. 2008, score and parts \$16.50.

This is an easy crowd pleaser for your intermediate to advanced string quartet. It uses some upper positions and double stops. I highly recommend this as an addition to a professional's gig book. From a teacher's perspective, it is a wonderful short piece to add to a program for solo and ensemble, and provides ample opportunity to discuss rhythmic poise, stylistic ideas and form. A.C.F.

DVDs/CDs

ART OF THE LEFT HAND with François Rabbath. Produced by Hans Sturm. Ball State University, 2-DVD set \$105.

Every field has its mavericks, those brave souls who chart paths unique to their talents and vision of potential artistic niches. Bassist François Rabbath is one such artist, one whose journey has been as unusual as it has been inspirational. His method, *Nouvelle technique de la*





Reviews

contrabasse, has been popular for years, his solo works are staples in recitals, and he has premiered many important new works, most notably from the pen of Frank Proto. Several years ago his *Art of the Bow* was released to great (and justified) acclaim, and now we finally have the expected follow-up, *Art of the Left Hand*. It is a two-disc set, the second of which is devoted in part to animated illustrations of his left hand from various angles. The production is jammed with practical advice and a detailed breakdown of his left hand philosophy. To sweeten the pot, there are plenty of riveting demonstrations of his performances that gauge the validity of his methodology. Rabbath explains in detail his notion of “movement, time, and space” (a corollary to his earlier trio of “bow placement, speed, and weight” with regard to efficacious right hand mechanics), stating that understanding their left hand application and interaction “resolves everything.” His detailed explanations of left hand movement and organization are practical and sensible, and bear the wisdom of decades of trial by fire. Yet any bassist expecting some kind of magic bullet or a series of miraculous shortcuts will be disappointed. Contrary to a commonly-held belief, Rabbath states that learning a work should begin with quick practice, rather than slow repetition. He suggests that beginning with fast left hand movements helps to gauge the correct distance, and this approach should later be re-enforced by slow repetition. He states that early slow shifting will lead to hesitation, though he doesn’t make a clear distinction between slow tempo and slow shifting, two decidedly different practice strategies.

The video is packed with many other valuable hints for efficient practice. Those who have tackled some of Rabbath’s solo works in perpetual motion are well aware that endurance is paramount to a successful performance. The key, he

believes, is that building strength is the most important element in building endurance, which in turn leads to velocity, another key component of his own music. He states that two hours a day of scalar practice is crucial, a regimen he himself applied for many years, and considers the foundation of his formidable left hand acumen. “Don’t rush—don’t try to be smart,” he says with regard to the building of this foundation. The build-up to two hours should take time, and the player should stick to a pattern of three days practice followed by one day of rest. He also warns against practicing long hours after a long rest, certainly good advice that any athletic trainer would echo.

Although the Syrian native and long-time French resident is pushing 80, the performances on the video are breathtaking for a player of any age. His excerpts from Bach’s Cello Suites as well as his own *Equation* and *Le Mi dans le Mille* (among others) are riveting. Sometimes his fractured English can be an impediment. However, patience on the part of the viewer pays off as the concepts become clear and recognition of Rabbath’s role in tradition is acknowledged. As with any iconoclast, there are bound to be concepts that will provoke discussion from those from competing schools. Rabbath speaks of “scientific thinking,” but those in academia are well aware that serious kinesiological study of the physiology of bass playing is still spotty at best. Some may object to the avoidance of the third finger in middle positions, while others take the opposite viewpoint, that anything other than strict Simandl precepts are anathema. There are also questions regarding the applicability of the method to orchestral playing, but this objection applies to nearly every attempt to promote the soloistic potential of the bass. Because most of Rabbath’s career has been spent performing his own music, it naturally follows that his technique mirrors his own compositions. For

example, since his music is largely diatonic, his reduction of the entire fingerboard into four or five positions is entirely sensible. This may not be as useful for other contemporary works that employ complex chromaticism. As various approaches to bass technique and interpretation compete for market share, Rabbath’s teaching tools continue to be a formidable contender. Instinct, common sense, and the wisdom of veterans like Rabbath and others will ultimately guide our performing and teaching. Special kudos to producer/director Hans Sturm for this historic set of invaluable videos. Both sets deserve a central place in any bassist’s library. M.Ca.

CELESTIAL. Frank Voltz. Chiera Music, 2009, \$5.

Voltz’s latest CD, *Celestial*, includes all original compositions and has a “lullaby” or “spa” feeling. How delightful to be able to hear the composer’s interpretation of the tunes we like to play! The CD is brilliant and includes Voltz’s ensemble arrangement of *Strolling Through the Strings* (Voltz played all the parts). The melody of the title tune, *Celestial* is so distinct, you will find yourself humming it after you hear it. In 3/4 time, it lies very well into the fingers for late beginner to early intermediate players. Some helpful fingerings are included, the left and right hands cross over each other in a couple of places, there are a few thumb slices and a few strategically placed glisses, all with that Voltz signature style and harmonies. D.G.V.

VIOLIN BOW TECHNIQUE. Fintan Murphy. Alfred, \$29.95.

In this efficiently-packaged DVD, Murphy, Head of Strings at Monash University School of Music, Australia, presents a vast amount of information about violin bow technique. The DVD contains 130 video clips with CD-quality audio of bowing techniques from the basic

holding posture to advanced off the string strokes. A brief glance at the table of contents reveals twelve major sections, each with many sub-sections. The sections are Bowhold, Bowing Fundamentals, Détaché, Slurred Bowings, Beginning Clicks, Bouncing Bowings, String Crossing, Chords, Tone Production, Planning and Practice, Integration, and Resources. The DVD ends with printable texts and scores. Many of the subsections feature standard etude and repertoire excerpts as material for the bow technique under discussion. The individual video clips are quick and to the point, each lasting usually under a minute. Murphy has isolated the details of each pedagogical segment and seems to have worked closely with the production of the video to ensure that the picture of the technique actually demonstrates the subject under consideration. The later video clips dissect famous moments in the repertoire of bowing. The clips of Murphy reducing the Prelude of Bach’s E Major Partita or the cadenza of Kreisler’s Praeludium and Allegro to basic open string crossings are interesting and useful to any teacher or performer. In addition to being a highly useful tool for a student or teacher, this collection gives a rare and brilliant glimpse into the sequential thought process of a very good teacher. A student of pedagogy will have a field day here tracing the careful development of bowing technique from an obvious master teacher. L.S.