

Red Leaf News



www.redleafpianoworks.com

Newsletter no.20 – October 2021

Red Leaf Pianoworks
a composers' collective

Martha Hill Duncan
Susan Griesdale
Beverly Porter
Rebekah Maxner
Janet Gieck
Joanne Bender
Teresa Richert
John Burge
Irene Voros
Peter Rudzik
June Armstrong
Wynn-Anne Rossi

COVID and COMPOSERS

Since our last Newsletter, Covid happened. No gatherings, no workshops, conventions, or presentations. A difficult time for Composers indeed! But we kept busy nonetheless. This Newsletter gives a glimpse of what we did during lockdown. Look for:

'Highlights from 2020 and 2021 The Covid years'

BIG NEWS! Wynn-Anne Rossi has joined Red Leaf!



An Interview with Wynn-Anne Rossi

And look for her free piece of music
at the end of the Newsletter!

How and when did you start composing?

I started making music at age three, thanks to a family piano and a playful mom. We would sit at our old Kimball piano and make up stories together. Inspirations came from fairy tales, creatures, emotions, anything that popped into our heads. I learned that the piano keys were a toy for the imagination, and I'm convinced that I'm a composer today because of it!

How would you characterize your music?

Ever-changing! I have traveled through so many chapters and genres of music that I'm not sure it can be defined. I started with a love for impressionist sounds, but other styles quickly moved into the mix. I've written everything from atonal to rock. There is a certain sound that moves through my crazy explorations, but I'll leave that to others to define. I'm a curious composer, motivating me to always try something new.

Continue Wynn-Anne's interview on the next two pages of the Newsletter.

SYLLABUS NEWS!!!! Congratulations to **June Armstrong** who has had three pieces selected for **ABRSM 2021-22 Piano Syllabus** – Under the Acacia Tree from Safari, Butterfly from Piano Star Duets and Sunlight Through the Trees from Piano Star Grade 1.



Do you write for instrumentation beyond the piano?

Yes! Like my exploration of genres, I have also moved through chapters of instrumentation. I like writing poetry/text, so that took me into vocal music. For 13 years, I worked as the outreach composer for the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. This inspired works for string orchestra and band. I tend to trust the wormholes which take me in multiple directions.

Do you have a particular voice as an educator?

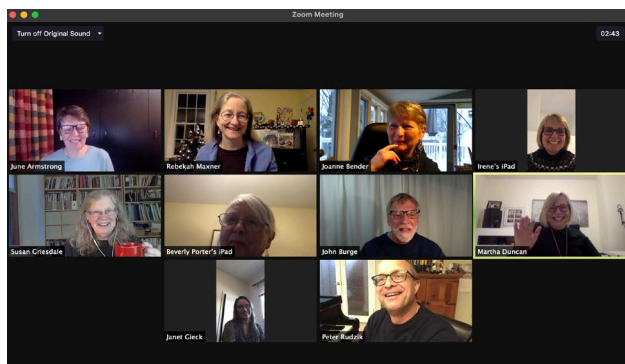
I am strongly committed to bringing the art of composition to any age, any level. It is important that students discover their own voice as part of their musical identity. Plus, it's a powerful way to teach hands-on music theory! I've written two complete series of composition workbooks: *Music by Me* (5 books, FJH Music with Kevin Olson) and *Creative Composition Toolbox* (6 books, Alfred Music). I also created two seasons of a video series called *Wednesdays with Wynn-Anne*. The first season (18 episodes) offers creativity inspirations/exercises, and the second season (14 episodes) offers a window into jazz genres and improvisations. These can be found on my website.

What projects are you working on now?

I have multiple publishers and I also now belong to Red Leaf Pianoworks, a collective of self-published composers. I have ongoing projects with all of them. I'm also working on a commission for a music school in California. They adopted me as their composer-in-residence for the current school year, and we will be doing several sessions and projects together. The culmination will be a festival concert in April, 2022. The students will perform Rossi works and original compositions, accompanied by awesome artwork. Exciting moments like these inspire me to keep creating new works and pursuing ever-developing ideas.

'Highlights from 2020 and 2021 The Covid years'

Irene Voros: As 2020 & 2021 was steeped in uncertainty and discomfort, it was a time when we were all stretched bit by bit, wondering how many adjustments we could all make while maintaining health and compassion. A highlight of that time for me was Red Leaf Pianoworks' first zoom meeting. It was so satisfying and exciting to see - in person, albeit from a distance - the beautiful group of talented individuals I have the privilege of collaborating with musically. The meeting took place on December 19, 2020 - greatly anticipated by all of us!



In other years it may have been difficult to be together all at once - from Europe through Eastern to Western Canada - but most of us had no place to go. Why not meet?! The world became a much smaller place through Covid. This was my most treasured gift. Teaching piano from a distance, overheating in masks, cancelling lessons for months at a time, reading music notation from my own music copy instead of side-by-side with my students ... I missed the close interaction that I so enjoy. Still - I was so grateful to continue teaching, enjoying music, and sharing life through conversations, zoom, and connecting with people. - Real people.

Titles from my book **INSPIRED** summed up 2020/21 for me: Solace, Compassion, Impact, Courage, Reflection, and Hope. Being able to express and enjoy music personally, in composition, and teaching - inspired me! Music is such a gift. My latest book, **FOREST FRIENDS**, was printed and released in January 2020. Covid hit in March. I look forward to sharing with teachers and students in the near future.



SYLLABUS NEWS!!! Congratulations to **Martha Hill Duncan, Susan Griesdale, Janet Gieck, Peter Rudzik, John Burge** whose music is being included in the updates to the Calgary Contemporary Showcase syllabus in Voice, Piano and Violin. <https://www.cscalgary.com/guidelines-and-syllabus>

Continuing Wynn-Anne's interview.

You have written several collections of piano music. Tell us about a few of them.

I have over 150 publications, so it's hard to pick and choose which ones rise to the top. However, I do have a few favorites!

One of a Kind (5 books, Alfred Music): These are a great place to start as teachers get to know my music. They offer a wide range of Rossi style books and levels. Be prepared for some humor, particularly in the early levels.

Musica Latina (12 books, Alfred Music): This series was my deep dive into Latin styles with 4 solo books, 4 duet books, and 4 holiday books. Get to know a wide range of Latin sounds with mesmerizing melodies, rich harmonies and cool rhythms.

Jazzin' Americana (8 books, Alfred Music): This unique series explores the many jazz genres from early ragtime to modern jazz. It is a crash course, with helpful trivia on jazz history and jazz greats. Be sure to use the second season of *Wednesdays with Wynn-Anne* as you work your way through this adventure. This will offer a safe leap into simple jazz improvisation.

Get Ready for Scale Duets (6 books, FJH Music): This is an older series, but I still use it in my private studio. Teacher duets refresh the learning process of scales, chords and arpeggios. Try the first book (*Get Ready for Pentascale Duets*) and you will discover that even the basics of piano can be entertaining. Plus it strengthens teacher/student relationship!

Treasures in Technique (5 books, FJH Music): I never practiced technique when I was a student. It was too boring. I wrote this series to inspire the fingers to move. Stickers, maps and humor bring this series to life!

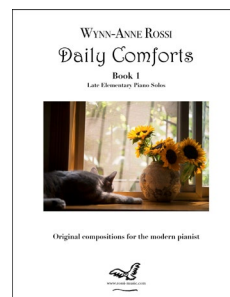
Tell us about your work with Red Leaf Pianoworks.

I'm enormously excited to be working with Red Leaf's cool cooperative of talented composers. For my launch into this group, I chose to write three books at three different levels:

Daily Comforts, book one (late elementary),
Daily Comforts, book two (early intermediate)
Classics Made New (intermediate).

The Daily Comforts series is directly inspired by the recent, challenging times during the pandemic. I explored the beautiful things that comfort me in my daily life with Haiku poetry and accessible music. The pieces have been a comfort to me at the end of a long day.

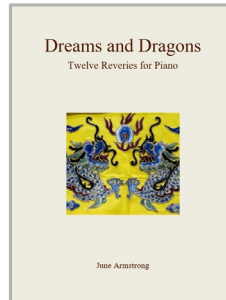
Classics Made New is a playful, nostalgic book which takes favorite classics and transforms them into modern renditions. The free piece in this newsletter is the first piece in this book: **Jazzier Prelude in C Major**, based on *Prelude in C Major* (Well-Tempered Clavier, book 1) by Johann Sebastian Bach.



SYLLABUS NEWS!!! Congratulations to **June Armstrong, Teresa Richert, Beverly Porter, Joanne Bender and Wynn-Anne Rossi** for getting their music accepted into the **London College of Music** Syllabus for 2022 – 2024.

'Highlights from 2020 and 2021 The Covid years'

June Armstrong: The challenges that the pandemic brought were many and varied, but there were also opportunities and new ideas. There was a lot more time for composing and this saw the completion and publication of two new books, ***Dreams and Dragons*** – an intermediate volume of atmospheric pieces, and ***Take Ten*** – a collection of jazz-inspired pieces for the elementary/early intermediate learner, designed to provide a platform for experimentation with improvisation.



The freedom provided from losing all my regular activities, as well as the loss of opportunity for pupils to perform, resulted in the creation of **'Play for the Composer!'**, <https://playforthecomposer.jimdofree.com/> - a trial worldwide festival of my music Incorporating performance by video, creation of artwork, stories and poems inspired by the music, with each performer receiving a certificate with my personal comments and being included in a Celebration Highlights video. This was an absolute delight and the first public Play for the Composer! has now been launched.

I was also delighted to adjudicate a UK national composition competition **Compose Yourself** which netted over 200 entries.

John Burge: Queen's University, where I have been teaching for almost 35 years, closed for just over a week due to COVID-19 restrictions on Friday, March 13, 2020 so that students could return home and then resumed with classes and exams handled online. It was then decided to deliver all courses remotely for the entire 2019/2020 academic year. Like all teachers, I have certainly learned a lot about such things as Zoom, how to pre-record and edit lectures, and marking PDFs of assignments using a tablet and electronic stylus. My salvation/therapy was found sitting at the piano every day, both writing music and practising. A large amount of piano music was composed which will be edited and published with Red Leaf over the next few years.

Many performances and premieres were cancelled but a few brave souls like the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, shifted to an entirely virtual concert format (without an audience) and their Spring 2021 concert program included the premiere of my work, ***Because Forgiveness Needs Another Word*** (originally to have been premiered in June 2020). Certainly one of the highlights over the past eighteen months was hearing the 8 finalists in the Concours Musical International de Montréal 2021 for Piano, play three of my ***Twenty-Four Preludes*** as the imposed test piece over three days in May 2021. This competition was to have taken place a year earlier but was rescheduled in a virtual format in 2021, with the pianists recording their programs from around the world. Canadian pianist Alice Burla, who is based in Geneva, won the prize for the best performance of my pieces and her stunning performance is still posted online if you want to check it out: [CMI 2021 Alice Burla](https://concoursmontreal.ca/en/competitors/alice-burla/), <https://concoursmontreal.ca/en/competitors/alice-burla/>



Highlights from 2020 and 2021 The Covid years

Janet Gieck: In the 2019-2020 season I was able to have one new piece performed online by Millar College of the Bible's choir called **Sweet Salvation**, co-written with my husband Lorn.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dt-BSyj98VII>.

I was able to adjudicate one live in person music festival in North Battleford, SK. One of my covid projects has been rebuilding my website, which is still not quite complete. I also worked on some of the composing and arranging necessary for a musical that will hopefully be performed this Christmas season at Millar College of the Bible called **A Taste of Grace**. I composed **My Refuge** which will also hopefully be performed by the Millar College of the Bible choir this fall.

Other musical adventures – I've been learning a lot about Music Learning Theory and how to incorporate that more into my teaching practice. I've had some fun experimenting on my DAW (digital audio workstation) and creating electronic music. I also had the privilege of seeing my oldest graduate from high school (not a musical event – but an adventure for sure!)

Rebekah Maxner: The pandemic caught me and my family completely off guard. We were getting our house ready to sell so we could move to Halifax and even had a deposit down on an apartment, when suddenly the first lockdown grounded us. With all of our children home, we realized we still needed the bigger house and were thankful we still had it and each other. The Acadia University Youth Orchestra had commissioned a three-movement piece for strings and it was scheduled for its debut performance that week, but was cancelled. Everything stopped except for my blogging, because I suddenly realized every piano teacher was in the same boat, looking for guidance on how to teach piano online. I stayed up past midnight several nights in a row that first lockdown weekend, writing blog articles to help piano teachers teach online and how to health-proof their piano studios.

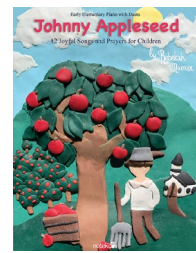
Like many piano teachers, I moved my teaching online for a while but have also been fortunate to live in Nova Scotia where COVID numbers have been low, and have been able to teach in person.

I've found time to be creative, and published three piano collections through 2019-2020:

Rock the Boat (Early Elementary),

Rock this Town (Elementary)

Johnny Applesseed (Early Elementary).



I also started the MaxMusic Piano eSheet Club with a brand-new studio-licensed eSheet each month, which has helped my music to be more accessible. Glory St. Germain invited me to contribute to *The Power of Why*, a book in which composers from around the globe tell our personal stories of why we composed a legacy, and have contributed to Nicola Cantan's *Colourful Keys* blog. Many of my activities were online. For example, I virtually adjudicated the Queen's County Music Festival for Charlottetown and also conducted several webinars for music groups in Canada, as well as a four-part workshop series for Brazil's Academia Cultura. Currently, I'm finishing a commission of piano works for Top Music Sheets.

Wynn-Anne Rossi: The pandemic has been a very wacky time for the musical world, including my own. When Alfred Music permanently closed its piano department last Summer (2020), I thought it was a sign to let go and build another life. It was deeply distressing. My fellow Alfred composers felt the same. We were all shell-shocked. But after picking up the pieces, I began to brainstorm what my new life as an independent composer might look like. I started making connections with smaller, more independent publishers. I gathered my own personal email list and started a blog for teachers. And I discovered Red Leaf! Slowly, the options began to open up. The trajectory of my career is now entirely in my hands! That's a freeing feeling, but there is a lot of unknown in the air. This is a dicey time for both major publishers and established composers. For now, I continue to write new music and give teacher workshops. Navigating through the unknown is beginning to feel a lot like fun! Wynn-Anne Rossi



Highlights from 2020 and 2021 The Covid years

Joanne Bender: For me, the pandemic was full of online teaching, composing, performing and adjudicating. I really enjoyed the many excellent student compositions from the BC Student Music Writing Competition. I was pleased to have my hymn published in the 2020 Mennonite Hymnal, Voices Together, which is used all over Canada and the US. I performed several virtual chamber music concerts for radio and YouTube. With more time to go for walks, I was inspired to write several new piano pieces such as **A New Path**. I am happy to be back to in-person lessons and I look forward to live concerts in 2022.

Susan Griesdale: The pandemic lockdown took me by surprise. But I am fortunate to live in a country setting where social distancing was easy to achieve. And I was able to use the empty time to focus on some works that had been left behind over the years. I completed a Violin collection of **Dance Vignettes**, 10 little dances based on synthetic scales, and another little dance for violin & piano titled **Little Dance for Clara** in honour of my nephew's young daughter. <http://www.susangriesdale.com/strings/>

Zoom teaching took over during that time and all I can say is - "it was a learning experience and one that I will be glad when it's over!" as the downside of country living is poor quality reception which made Zoom lessons quite a challenge!



Martha Hill Duncan - "Be careful what you wish for, lest it come true!"

How many times during my overly busy life of teaching, choral conducting, music festivals and administrivia did I dream of limitless, quiet and solitary hours for creativity, contemplation and composing? My wish list certainly did not include months of lockdown and a world-wide pandemic!! Who could have predicted that I'd be denied in-person teaching, singing, conducting and performing with students, singers, teachers and other composers!

My first reaction was one of panic, then relief – finally, a chance to calm down, reassess, catch up on sleep, housekeeping and gardening. With so many unfilled hours before me I admit to spending some serious TV time watching British detective series, working mindless jigsaw puzzles and learning how to bake. As time marched on, though, I became rather desperate for family, friends and a sense of purpose. Would I be able to use this time to further develop my own creativity, focus on completing unfinished compositions and clear out the backlog of my tangled musical brain?

With that decision made, I chased away much of my sadness, worry and distress with focused musical work: oodles of art songs, a two piano work, a couple of choral arrangements and several commissions. Each day brought new musical challenges, experimentation and self-discovery. I have never been SO grateful to be a musician and composer.

Despite all of the challenges of being physically separated, I discovered that teachers were still passionately committed to their students who were still studying, practising, creating and reveling in great music. I also enjoyed being invited into students' homes for YouTube festival adjudications, learning online teaching techniques, honing video making skills and discovering the value and wonder of FaceTime, Zoom and a good ring light!

Martha Hill Duncan

<https://www.marthahillduncan.com/index.php>



Martha Hill Duncan continued.....

HOW I SPENT MY LOCKDOWN:

Where the Aspens Grow for two pianos

Something's Fishy for intermediate piano, commissioned by Abundant Silence

Elissa for late intermediate piano, appearing in Red Leaf's anthology, *Branches*, in 2022

A Season of Sensations: 3 songs for high voice and piano, commissioned by Graphite Publishing, Poetry by Meg Freer

How Will the Rain Fall? Four Songs of Reflection for medium/high Voice and Piano

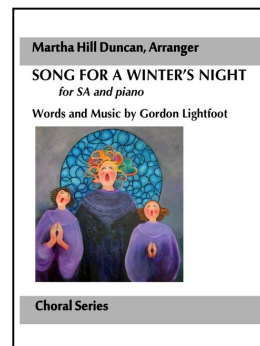
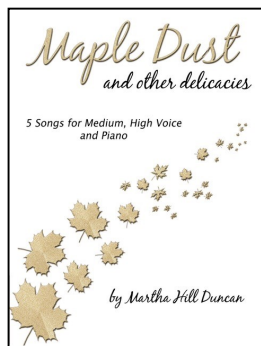
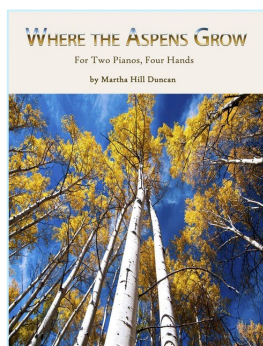
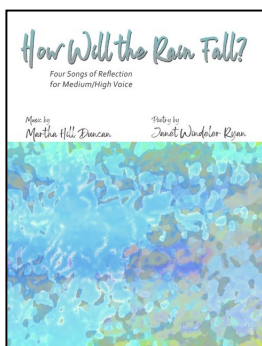
Poetry by Janet Windeler Ryan

Maple Dust and other Delicacies Five Songs for Medium, High Voice and Piano

Poetry by various Canadian poets

Trouble in the Fields by Nancy Griffith arr. for SSA and piano, Sheet Music Plus

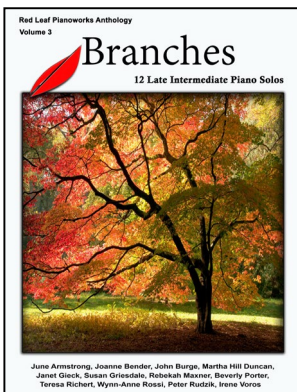
Song for a Winter's Night by Gordon Lightfoot arr. for SSA and piano, Sheet Music Plus



What's Upcoming?

MTNA CONVENTION IN Minneapolis in March 2022

ORMTA CONVENTION in Kingston July 2022!



Red Leaf Composers will be showcasing our Late intermediate level Anthology, **Branches**, at the ORMTA Provincial Convention next July!. Composers are busy now putting it together. Plan to attend to hear the world premier of this wonderful collection!



To my island pianist and friend, Jón Sigurðsson
Based on Prelude in C Major (Well-Tempered Clavier, book 1)
by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Jazzier Prelude in C Major

Wynn-Anne Rossi

Andante con moto

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time. It consists of four systems, each with a right-hand and left-hand staff. The first system begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The right-hand part features a melody with eighth-note patterns, including slurs and fingerings (1, 2, 3). The left-hand part consists of quarter notes and rests. The second system includes a *simile* marking. The third system shows a key signature change to one sharp (F#) in the right-hand part. The fourth system continues the piece with similar rhythmic patterns and fingerings.



9

Musical score for measures 9 and 10. The right hand features a complex melodic line with slurs and fingerings (5, 4, 5, 4, 5, 4). The left hand provides a steady accompaniment with quarter notes and rests.

11

Musical score for measures 11 and 12. The right hand continues with slurred melodic phrases and fingerings (2, 4, 3, 4, 3). The left hand accompaniment includes a double bar line in measure 12.

13

Musical score for measures 13 and 14. The right hand features slurred melodic phrases with fingerings (4, 5, 4, 5). The left hand accompaniment includes a double bar line in measure 14.

15

Musical score for measures 15 and 16. The right hand continues with slurred melodic phrases and fingerings (2, 4, 4, 2, 4, 5, 5). The left hand accompaniment includes a double bar line in measure 16.

17

Musical score for measures 17 and 18. The right hand features slurred melodic phrases with fingerings (2, 4, 5, 5, 4). The left hand accompaniment includes a double bar line in measure 18.



19

Musical score for measures 19-20. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a 7/8 time signature, featuring a continuous eighth-note pattern. The lower staff is in bass clef with a 7/8 time signature, featuring a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note. Fingerings are indicated: '1' above the first measure of the upper staff and '4' above the second measure. Fingerings '4' and '5' are shown below the first and second measures of the lower staff, respectively.

21

Musical score for measures 21-22. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a 7/8 time signature, featuring a continuous eighth-note pattern. The lower staff is in bass clef with a 7/8 time signature, featuring a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note. Fingerings '4' and '5' are shown below the first and second measures of the lower staff, respectively. A sharp sign (#) is placed below the first measure of the lower staff.

23

Musical score for measures 23-24. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a 7/8 time signature, featuring a continuous eighth-note pattern. The lower staff is in bass clef with a 7/8 time signature, featuring a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note. Fingerings '5' and '5' are shown below the first and second measures of the lower staff, respectively.

25

Musical score for measures 25-26. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a 7/8 time signature, featuring a continuous eighth-note pattern. The lower staff is in bass clef with a 7/8 time signature, featuring a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note. Fingerings '2' and '5' are shown below the first and second measures of the lower staff, respectively. The second measure of the lower staff includes a slur over the notes and fingerings '1', '4', and '5' above the notes.

27

poco rit.

Musical score for measures 27-28. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a 7/8 time signature, featuring a continuous eighth-note pattern. The lower staff is in bass clef with a 7/8 time signature, featuring a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note. Fingerings '1' and '1' are shown above the first and second measures of the upper staff, respectively. The instruction *poco rit.* is written in the lower left. A fermata is placed over the final note of the upper staff in measure 28. A double bar line is at the end of the system.