

Red Leaf News

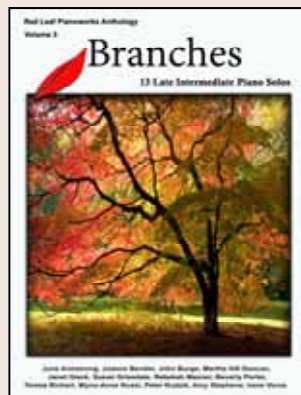
www.redleafpianoworks.com

Newsletter no.21 – September 2022



Red Leaf Pianoworks
a composers' collective

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



Our new Anthology!

Branches

Red Leaf has published it's third Anthology for level 6 & 7. Available now!

<https://redleafpianoworks.com/music.php?sort=g38m>

Introducing Amy Stephens

An Introduction from Amy

I'm a San Francisco-based composer/pianist, originally from metro Detroit. Canada felt like a second home to me, since we explored Ontario every chance we could get when I was young. So the opportunity to join Red Leaf was like a homecoming for me, and I'm very thankful that Wynn-Anne Rossi brought my music to the Red Leaf Collective for consideration last year. I am very honored now to be a part of such an esteemed group of gifted composers who love the piano as much as I do!



RCM Syllabus – Congratulations to the Red Leaf Composers who had their music included in the RCM 2022 Celebration Series Piano Syllabus. Martha, Joanne and Susan were fortunate to be able to attend the gala to celebrate the launch. An exciting time for Red Leaf Composers!. You can check the details of the repertoire included in the syllabus here.

<https://redleafpianoworks.com/catalogue.php>



Updates are from the Composers Themselves

Amy, Tell us about your formal training.

My formal classical piano training began with lessons through the Kelly Kirby method—a Canadian-based Kindergarten piano method that was also popular in the Detroit area. For my first year, I practiced on the wooden toy piano that had been in my playpen since I was a toddler—it had two octaves and enough keys for most of the books in the Kelly Kirby series. After that first year, my parents invested in a real piano. As my skills grew, I attended Interlochen Music Camp each summer for lessons and classes with the faculty of University of Michigan, and then started prepping for college music school.

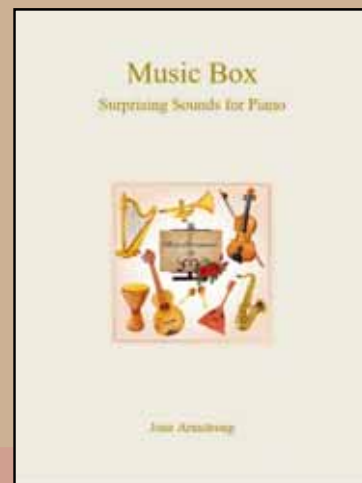
It was in high school that I first developed an interest in jazz, but jazz piano lessons didn't yield an understanding of how to improvise, so jazz remained a mystery to me for a few more years.

I was so excited to attend Indiana University School of Music for a bachelors in classical piano, studying with James Tocco, Dr. Karen Shaw and Evelyne Brancart. Little did I know that David N. Baker, the father of jazz education, was Indiana's chair of the jazz department. I took his Improv 1 class freshman year for fun and was blown away at his ability to teach hundreds of classical musicians how to understand jazz and improvise in just one semester—what a fantastic experience! This time jazz fundamentals really clicked for me, and I decided to add a bachelors degree in jazz piano as well, studying with Dr. Luke Gillespie. I stayed for my Masters in jazz and also received a Performer's Certificate, and I continued my classical lessons as well. David Baker became my mentor in composition. Indiana University was a truly great place for me to study both classical and jazz piano, earn my degrees, and begin my journey as a composer.

June Armstrong

An exciting new collection **Music Box** has just been published. This is an exploration of 27 different musical instruments, ranging from timpani to cello, and from balalaika to lute. Lots of different musical styles are involved, as well as references to many well-known musical characters such as the Sugar Plum Fairy and Til Eulenspiegel.

<https://www.junearmstrong.com/books/music-box/>



The online festival of my piano music, '**Play for the Composer!**' is now on to its third event and is, as ever, a total delight. It is wonderful to hear some of my compositions performed for the first time!

<https://playforthecomposer.jimdofree.com/>

I have also enjoyed adjudicating the second **Compose Yourself** 2022 UK national composition competition. I look forward to returning to in person lessons this year and to starting to play chamber and orchestral music again.

Janet Gieck

So far in 2022 I have been able to adjudicate one virtual festival for the Mainline Music Festival in Saskatchewan, and one in-person festival in Brooks, AB. It was so good to be able to start to hear more live music this season! I enjoyed presenting a composition workshop for students in Coronach, SK and had the privilege of workshopping the student's piano pieces for their upcoming festival. I am also looking forward to giving another composition workshop to students in Maple Creek, SK. at the end of September.

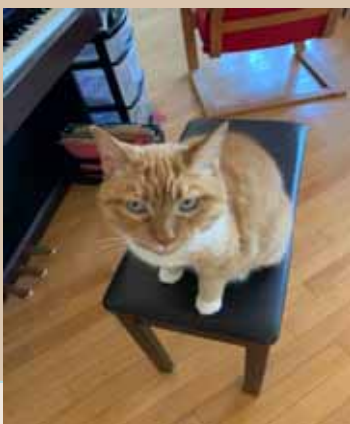
On the music-writing front, I arranged a few pieces for Millar College of the Bible's upcoming Christmas program – one is for choir and orchestra called **Step Into the Light** by Lorn Gieck. The other is a traditional piece called **Bag of Spuds** which I arranged for flute, violin, cello and piano.

I have finished updating my website www.gieckmusic.com to give it a fresh new look and hopefully make it more user-friendly. I'm so excited that digital downloads and studio licenses are now available! On a personal note, I had the joy of seeing my middle child graduate from high school this spring so life has been full!

Amy - When did you start composing?

Composing came partway through my Masters degree. It was a surprise to me that melodies and harmonies were suddenly coming out from under my fingers, and I think it had a lot to do with gaining confidence with improvisation. My Masters recital was the first public performance of my first collection of songs for jazz octet, and the audience response was very encouraging. A couple months later we were able to record those songs, and a series of release concerts quickly followed. This was the genesis of my jazz ensemble, Amy Stephens Group, which has played and recorded my jazz ensemble originals since 1998. We gigged around the Midwest for many years together, playing at jazz festivals, concert series and jazz clubs.

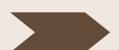
On my third jazz quartet album, I included one solo piano composition, Inquietude, which seemed to be very moving to listeners. Around that time, my three sons were very young and ensemble gigging was harder to pull off, so I decided to pause performances and expand that one song into a solo piano suite. Becoming: Suite for Solo Piano in Seven Movements came to fruition. That blossomed into a solo piano album, and many solo concerts followed. Much of my time the last four years has been devoted to composing more suites for piano.



Beverly Porter

I'm retired from teaching as of the end of August so my life is changing now.

It's just me, my kitty Figaro, and my extended family. One of my grandsons was just married and I met my three GREAT grandsons this summer!



Wynn-Anne Rossi

Wheels are turning again for workshops and conferences! I was pleased to recently offer a 2-hour session at the Schmitt Music EXPO in Minneapolis, introducing my new materials. Daily Comforts and Classics Made New caused quite the buzz, and it was a joy to interact with such enthusiastic teachers.

My next event will be presenting three sessions for the GMTA conference (Georgia Music Teachers Association) in early November. Red Leaf has a great reputation, so I'm pleased and proud to be a new member of this awesome cooperative.

And the big news is that I now have a US distributor for my Red Leaf publications! This makes shipping and distribution easy for both individuals and dealers within the United States.

If you're curious, visit CCC Music Company: <https://cccmusiccompany.com>

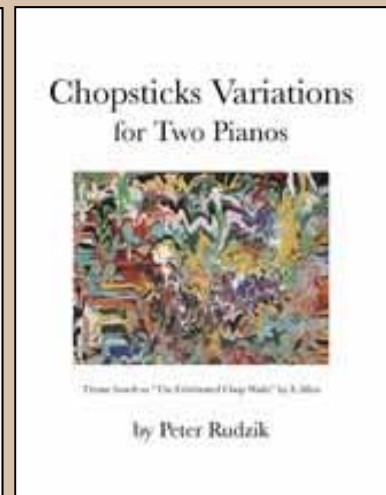
Peter Rudzik

Just published!

A new set of piano duets:
Chopsticks Variations Advanced piano

Arctic Sonata. Advanced piano

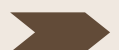
<https://www.peterrudzik.com/shop>



Amy - How would you characterize your music?

I would categorize the solo piano music I write as Third Stream, which is the happy marriage of classical form with jazz language and sensibilities.

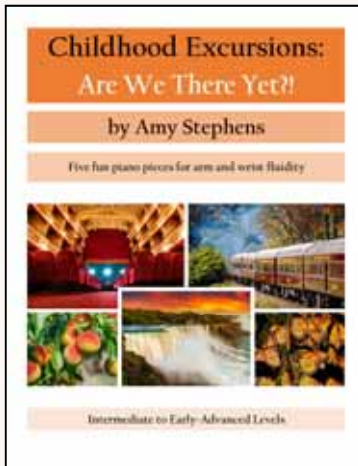
As I mentioned earlier, I felt a strong pull towards jazz for a long time but didn't understand it for many years. Fascinatingly, once I understood jazz theory and how jazz functions, I realized that all my favorite moments in classical piano pieces had elements of jazz harmony or rhythm (i.e. the upper extensions used in the harmonies of Ravel and Brahms, the rhythms and harmony of Gershwin's preludes and works for piano with orchestra, Debussy's extended harmonies and use of modes, etc.). My mentor David Baker was a prolific composer and wrote quite a bit of Third Stream music for classical ensembles. About six years ago I realized that's the direction I wanted to take in my solo piano suites, bringing together my favorite elements of classical and jazz.



Amy - You have written several collections of solo piano music. Tell us about the suites in our Red Leaf catalogue...

Yes, I'm excited to share these! Included in the Red Leaf catalogue are three of my suites:

Childhood Excursions: Are We There Yet?!



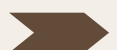
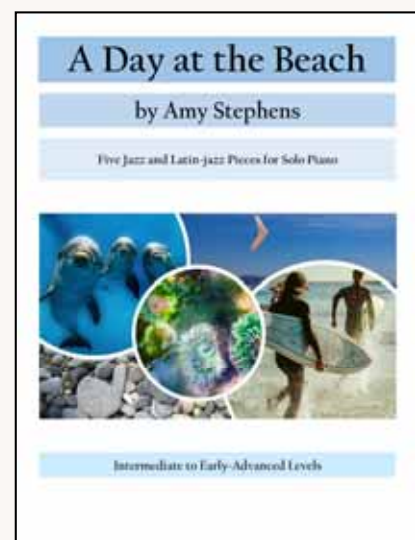
This suite was written for my Red Leaf debut! This is a set of very fun and colorful etudes for intermediate to early advanced players, helping them develop arm and wrist fluidity.

By car from my childhood home in the Detroit area, Windsor was just 30 minutes away, so we visited Ontario very often, especially on American holidays and throughout the summers. In honor of my inauguration into the Red Leaf Collective, I wrote songs about those fantastic memories. The pieces center around five of our favorite activities: 1. visiting the Stratford festival and the Shaw festival to see live plays and musicals, 2. riding a boat to see Niagara Falls, 3. marveling at the monarch butterfly migration at Pointe Pelee, 4. riding the Algoma Central Railway to Sault Ste. Marie to see the Fall colors, and 5. enjoying harvest time at orchards along the way.

The five pieces teach elbow and wrist motions to guide important concepts like drop-lift slurs, arm/wrist circles, side-to-side/horizontal arm movements, in-and-out movement, wrist rotation and contrary motion. As an adjudicator for piano events in the U.S., I have seen a great deal of finger-only playing among Gen Zs, and I wanted to create a suite to address this issue, encouraging players to think of the elbow as the conductor of the fingers. Real speed and endless color at the piano can come as a result. Ultimately my aim was to create five pieces that feel very fun to play!

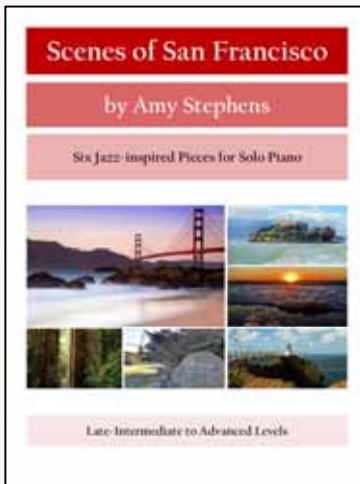
A Day at the Beach

This suite has five pieces in jazz and Latin-jazz styles which are musical snapshots of my favorite spots and activities along the Northern California coastline: skipping rocks on the water, watching hang gliders leap from the cliffs and soar above the ocean, marveling at the colorful tide pools, watching surfers navigate the unpredictable waves, and wishing I could swim with the dolphin pods leaping out of the water! Each piece has an accompanying song construction page, where I break down how the song was written, which scales and chord progressions and rhythms I used, and how to create new ideas based on those concepts. So there's an extra layer of learning for those players looking beyond the songs themselves. I also feel like this suite is super-fun under the fingers and helps players dip their toes into the world of jazz and Latin-jazz rhythms in a safe space.



Amy – continuing the Suites in our Red Leaf catalogue...

Scenes of San Francisco



At this point you can tell I love to write character pieces! This suite of six songs captures my favorite spots in and around this iconic city. Interestingly, when I first moved to San Francisco in 2007, I really didn't like it here. We live in the coastal microclimate right next to the Pacific Ocean, and three months of dense fog all summer can be pretty maddening—you can't even tell what time it is because there are no shadows, and some days I can't even see my neighbor's house! It's the weirdest time of year, and so very cold—we wear winter coats and hats for those 12 weeks of summer.

So this suite is a tribute to making peace with the move here 15 years ago and realizing how much I do love places here very much. I've been a swimmer all my life, but this is the first place I've done open-water swimming, so I wrote songs about looking right up Golden Gate

bridge from water below and racing in the bay from Alcatraz Island to the city—such incredible life experiences I'll never forget. There are songs about the majestic redwoods at Muir Woods, strolling leisurely through Golden Gate Park, watching the sunset at the beach once the fog clears, and standing at the lighthouse on the remote rock formations that lead into the San Francisco Bay. I've grown to love this city and wanted to acknowledge that through music.

Irene Voros

My latest book, **Forest Friends**, was printed and released in January 2020 during the difficult time of Covid.

With such titles as Porcupine Parade, Songbird, Skitter Scatter, Rascal Rock, Grizzly's Groove, Woodpecker's Drum, you will find ten Elementary/Intermediate engaging Piano Solos depicting life in the Forest. The music presents a journey of discovery with jazz chords, evocative melodies, syncopated rhythms, expressive ballads, and lively marches.

You can order the hard copy book or a digital e-book/e-piece at www.irenevoros.com/compositions/



Rebekah Maxner

Hi! It's Rebekah here and I want to tell you about my summer. It's been a lovely blend of family trips and being creative. My husband and I travelled to historic Quebec city. We also took my daughter, Clara, to the green, hilly landscape of PEI to see the musical Anne of Green Gables.

Professionally, I've been composing and writing in my blog. I took over the position as Composition Contest chair in the Canadian Federation of Music Teacher Associations and enjoyed supporting the work of young composers as a volunteer.

This fall my choral piece **We Stand Together** is slated to be performed at a charity event by Hantsport's Pop-Up Choir to raise funds to support a refugee family. In April I was excited to adjudicate Junior Piano in person at the Truro Music Festival. And together with Martha and Susan, have been engaged to be interviewed by Olivia Adams for a podcast.

ORMTA 2022 Convention

PASSAGES

Navigating the Waves
of Musical Change



OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF BRANCHES AT JULY 2022 ORMTA CONVENTION



This past July 22-24, the Kingston Branch of the Ontario Registered Music Teachers hosted the provincial conference at The Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing and Visual Arts at Queen's University. It was wonderful to meet so many teachers and colleagues in person.

Dr. John Burge and Martha Hill Duncan were part of the local steering committee and were joined by Ontario Red Leaf composers, Beverly Porter, Joanne Bender and Susan Griesdale in our official launch of our 3rd anthology, **BRANCHES**, for Late Intermediate levels.

Martha Hill Duncan

I've been busy spreading the news of "living composers" and new piano repertoire with different teacher organizations, via Zoom presentations. Two talks entitled, "**Demystifying the Score**" and "**Teaching from the Heart**" were presented to music teachers in Saskatchewan and "**Women Working Together: The Red Leaf Pianoworks Collective**" was presented to teachers in Lethbridge, Alberta. (Obviously, we have gone on to include talented male composers in our collective since those early days of Red Leaf!!!)

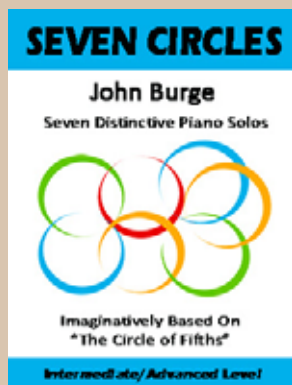
I was also invited to join the Composer Panel at the RCM Toronto Intensive Workshop, **Music Lights the Way**, held on August 20th along with composers Christopher Norton and Maria Case. I spoke about and demonstrated my piano solos included in the new Celebration Series.

It's been a few months of intense administrative activities for me and John Burge with the ORMTA Conference. Now, Red Leaf is focusing on exploring international shipping and distribution. As we grow, we need to find ways to serve you in the best way possible.



John Burge

During the 2021/22 academic year, I had a sabbatical leave from Queen's University and was able to bring out six volumes of piano music with Red Leaf Pianoworks,



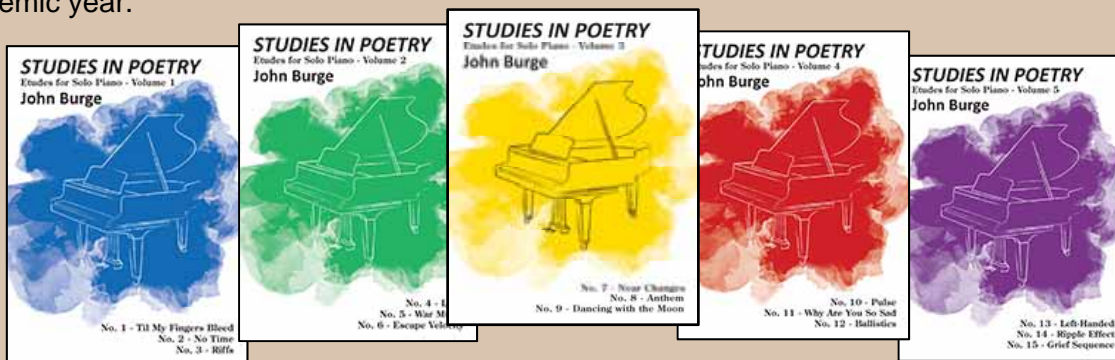
totaling 22 pieces most at the diploma level. While

some of these publications are definitive versions of pieces written as far back as 2000, the collection, **Seven Circles**, was entirely new and contains seven pieces all inspired by different uses of the circle-of-fifths harmonic progression. I made a video introduction of these works that can be found on his YouTube channel at:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PivFcvKD9TA&t=458s>

The other works published are Volumes 1 to 5 of my **Studies in Poetry** series. Each volume consists of three etudes that use a title from some of my favourite books of poetry written in English as a springboard for the music. Now that I have these pieces back in my fingers, I will eventually be posting video introductions. In the meantime, I will be playing selections in lecture/demonstrations at Queen's University, the University of Ottawa and the University of Alberta during the current academic year.



Finding and Using the Heart of a Composition To Inspire a Performance



I also prepared a 48-minute video presentation for the CFMTA 2022 Online Conference that took place in July. Titled, **The Heart of a Composition Method**, the video lecture summarizes an approach I have used over the years in coaching student pianists in playing contemporary music. The basic premise is to have the student first find a passage from the piece that can be

identified as the climax or that they are really drawn to. By analyzing and polishing that section first, the performer then builds their interpretation around the section they initially isolated. There is a real sense of efficiency and focus generated by using this approach that I found also worked incredibly well in running an online masterclass. The presentation also connects this approach to the teaching of composition and good composing in general. This video ends by using a piece from **Seven Circles** as an example, and can be viewed on my YouTube channel (note: if you open up the YouTube description, there is a link to the handout):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qP16WK6d4YI&t=30s>

Joanne Bender

I am excited to be a solo performer in a small piano recital in Leipzig, Germany on Oct. 10. The program: ***Life and Love in Leipzig***, features music by beloved Leipzig composers, J.S. Bach, Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn, Robert and Clara Schumann and Johannes Brahms. I am looking forward to sharing my joy and love of this music with family and friends, while paying tribute to inspirational German composers, especially women.

Artwork: ThomasSchule in Leipzig drawn by Felix Mendelssohn



Susan Griesdale



CFMTA CALL FOR COMPOSITIONS 2022 - My piece ***For the Children*** for violin and piano was written as a response to the news of the missing indigenous children from residential schools across Canada. This piece won the CFMTA 2022 Call for Compositions and is available as a free on-line download to performers who enter Contemporary Showcase for the 2022 Canada Music week in November. You can watch a video performance and download scores here: <https://www.cfmta.org/en/call-for-composition-2022/>

ACNMP SYLLABI - my violin piece ***Little Dance for Clara*** and my solo violin collection ***Dance Vignettes*** were both accepted onto the **Contemporary Showcase Syllabi** for Alberta and Ontario. You can see video performances and look at scores here: <http://www.susangriesdale.com/strings/>

Amy - Was there a particular moment when you realized that you wanted to choose piano/music as a career?

Yes! I was eight years old and watching a piano concerto concert at Detroit Symphony Hall, and I decided right then I would work hard to become a pianist and recording artist. I was very excited about it!

Amy - Tell us about your piece included in this newsletter.

Waterfall is from the new book, ***Childhood Excursions***, and is a musical picture of what it was like to ride the 'Maid of the Mist' boat along Niagara Falls on the Canadian side. We stood in yellow raincoats in complete awe of God's creation in that gorgeous place. This piece is a ballad that gives the player an opportunity to practice wrist rotation on the intro and outro and then contrary motion moving from the elbows on the A sections. Often the harmonies travel to unexpected places, which keeps the listener guessing, but you'll get a satisfying resolution at the end, I promise!



IV. Waterfall

Niagara Falls is absolutely gorgeous!
We explored the Canadian side and walked in yellow raincoats through the mist.

Objective: wrist rotation

Right Hand:

In the intro and outro, this ballad will require wrist rotation between the 5th finger and thumb for the musical motive. It's a similar motion to gently turning a doorknob. Theme one in m.8 will require that you often cross your 2nd finger over your thumb—achieving this also uses wrist rotation.

Left Hand:

Your left hand can rely on the pedal to connect notes. Let your elbow guide your hand up and down horizontally for a gentle, flowing sound.



Waterfall

Amy Stephens

Freely with rubato

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The right hand features a continuous eighth-note melody with a slur over the first four measures and a triplet of eighth notes in the fourth measure. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is present in the first measure.

Musical notation for measures 5-7. The right hand continues the eighth-note melody, which concludes with a triplet of eighth notes in the seventh measure. The left hand accompaniment includes a *rit.* (ritardando) marking in the sixth measure. A dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano) is present in the fifth measure.

Musical notation for measures 8-11. The tempo is marked "Gently flowing" with a quarter note equal to 65 (♩ = 65). The right hand features a descending eighth-note scale with a slur and fingerings: 4 3 1 3 2 3 1 3 4 in the first measure and 4 3 1 3 2 3 1 3 4 in the second measure. The left hand accompaniment includes fingerings: 5 1 3 2 1 in the first measure and 5 2 1 3 1 in the second measure. A dynamic marking of *mp* is present in the eighth measure.

Musical notation for measures 12-15. The right hand continues the descending eighth-note scale with a slur and fingerings: 1 4 5 4 3 1 3 1 2 3 2 in the first measure. The left hand accompaniment includes fingerings: 5 2 1 2 in the first measure. A dynamic marking of *mp* is present in the twelfth measure.

16

1 2 3

20

24

mf

28

32

1 2 3 4

24

36

5

5 4 2 1 3

rit.

ff

40

a tempo

4

1 3 2

mp

44

48

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3

mf

52

56

Musical score for measures 56-59. Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The melody in the treble clef consists of quarter notes and eighth notes, with a long slur over the first three measures. The bass clef accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern. Measure 59 ends with a fermata.

60

Musical score for measures 60-63. Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. The melody continues with quarter and eighth notes, slurred across measures 60-62. The bass clef accompaniment has a steady eighth-note pattern. Measure 63 ends with a fermata.

64

molto rit.

Musical score for measures 64-67. Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. The melody is slurred across all four measures. The bass clef accompaniment has a steady eighth-note pattern. Dynamics include *f* at measure 64 and *ff* at measure 65. Measure 67 has an *8va.* marking and a fermata.

68

Freely with rubato

Musical score for measures 68-71. Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. The melody is a continuous eighth-note pattern, slurred across all four measures. The bass clef accompaniment consists of chords. Dynamics include *f* at measure 68 and *mf* at measure 70. Measure 71 has a triplet of eighth notes and a fermata.

72

molto rit.

Musical score for measures 72-75. Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. The melody is a continuous eighth-note pattern, slurred across all four measures. The bass clef accompaniment consists of chords. Dynamics include *p* at measure 72 and *pp* at measure 75. Measure 75 ends with a fermata.