

position of the five-year-old Debussy on a tricycle to his early *Mazurka*. The implied fingering in *D'un cahier d'esquisses* shows pivotal thumbs and close-to-the-keys hand position. Howat later suggest that perhaps the composer was ambidextrous. The chapter looks at some of the most difficult passages in the repertoire, while noting possible solutions from flat fingers to rounded ones, from wrist touches to extended passages, amongst others. "The Composer as Pianist" takes a look into the recordings made by the composers themselves, including the problems that recording limitations produced down to eyewitness reports of their playing. This chapter is full of valuable insights and closes the book with quotes from each composer (p. 324).

The Appendices are priceless additions: 1) "Facilmente, facilmente", finding technical ease; 2) "Glosses on titles and musical allusions"; 3) "Composers' surviving instruments and recordings"; 4) "Critical editions: a brief summary"; 5) "Locations of musical manuscripts discussed".

If there is one criticism to make it would be that the first part seems out of place. The reader who is not familiar with Howat's previous work may lose interest early on because of the detailed analytical stance presented. The second part would have been a better choice with which to start the book, although the author may have felt that the resulting juxtaposition with the "Rhythmic games" in Part 3 would not have been as desirable.

Howat's penetrating mind and hawk-like perceptions make this book one that will remain in history by "Lifting the Lid on French Piano Music". It is an extraordinary achievement. He should follow it with a series of DVDs that would show his brilliant playing, humour, editions, and spontaneous encyclopaedic knowledge of the music of Debussy, Ravel, Fauré and Chabrier.

Nancy Lee Harper

**PIANO-YOGA®: Transform your hands: A complete ten week course of piano exercises, created by GÉNIA.** London: Piano-Yoga, Ltd. 2009, available at: [www.piano-yoga.com](http://www.piano-yoga.com). ISBN 978-0-9561184-5-5; ISMN 979-0-9002160-5-2. \$19.99. Also available in stages: Preliminary Stage: Foundation Piano-Yoga®, for advanced beginner, intermediate, and advanced pianists, \$4.99; Stage One: Core Piano-Yoga®, for advanced and intermediate pianists, \$9.99; Stage Two: Yin Piano-Yoga®, for intermediate and advanced pianists, \$4.99; Advanced Piano-Yoga®, for advanced pianists, \$5.99.

This is a book for a lifetime of healthy piano playing! Holistic in its approach, *Piano-Yoga* combines warm-up and cool down exercises for both small and large

hands that can be done with special breathing exercises to enhance the efficacy, or not. The instructions are simple, the layout attractive and clear, and the challenges only as difficult as one makes them.

A body-mind approach, it develops concentration while getting hands into shape very quickly. The exercises can be done in as little as three minutes or as a complete course in 55 minutes, quite a contrast to the story that I heard about Alicia de Larrocha spending two hours daily on exercises to open up her small hands! There are also alternative options for the exercises so the pianist does not get bored. The suggested correlated list of repertoire to use with the exercises, whether for the advanced beginner, intermediate, or advanced pianist, is a helpful tool and includes all classical styles. As well, the exercises are a very good back-to-the-piano approach after awhile away from practising and quickly get the pianist back into shape. Care is taken as to the important roles of the thumbs and wrists.

The term *yoga*, according to author GÉNIA, means "union" and in this case it is union of the pianist and the pianist's soul with the piano. The exercises themselves are very freeing, while the breathing exercises have a very calming effect. Their benefits may differ from person to person. Some may find that the fingers benefit the most, while others may find that their concentration becomes stronger. Even children can use these slow, strength-building exercises. Although the playing exercises are written out, they could easily be taught by rote as they are based on broken chord configurations. There are also other exercises for warm-ups that can be done anywhere. Special care is made to avoid any excess tension.

How did the book come into being? The creator herself was invited to play Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* and because she wanted to strengthen her hands for this concert she sought to find a coherent programme of exercises that suited her needs – to no avail. In the end, she designed her own, and through that experience, as well as being a yoga practitioner and teaching her own students, she developed the exercises.

So, who is GÉNIA [Chudinovitch]? Not only is she a gifted Ukrainian piano prodigy with outstanding reviews for her playing and for teaching, but she comes from an impressive line of pianists, which include Vladimir Horowitz. Horowitz's sister, Regina Horowitz, was GÉNIA's great-grandmother and teacher and the dedicatee of the book. GÉNIA's modesty is meritorious and her technical-artistic creation "genial". This book gets 5 stars from me! It is downloadable in full or in parts at the site listed above. Let's hope that we soon have an accompanying DVD.

Nancy Lee Harper

**QUINTessenz, eine praktische Harmonielehre basierend auf Improvisieren am Klavier, Hören, Spielen, Singen, Komponieren, mit CD, Robijn Tilanus, 2004, Amsterdam (Friedrich Hofmeister Musikverlag, Leipzig, 2009), ISBN 978-3-87350-045-7, 25€.**

This very practical and important book, based on keyboard improvisation (Hearing, Playing, Singing, Composing) with CD, has recently been translated into German and hopefully soon to appear in English. It is comprehensive and offers such a logical, yet simple, approach to improvisation that all fears melt away and soon the student is immersed into a fun and magical way of learning and making music as it used to be and as it should be. Functional in its outlook, the author has done a fine job in covering improvisation through melodic (intervallic and scalar) and harmonic (modal, tonal, chromatic, bitonal, atonal, blues, jazz, and other idioms) approaches. Modulation techniques in different styles are presented. Appendices provide additional important theoretical and acoustical laws; composing for four-voiced choirs; and notation of chord symbols. The bibliography list includes both standard references in classical and jazz music, as well as little-known ones, such as Margit Varró's *Der lebendige Klavierunterricht* (Simrock, 1958). The accompanying CD may be used with other instruments or voice. Tilanus's work and workshops are important means to carrying on the tradition, now somewhat lost, of improvisation at the keyboard.

Nancy Lee Harper

**THE COMPLETE COLLABORATOR: The Pianist as Partner** by Martin Katz  
Oxford University Press, New York 2009.  
ISBN 978-0-19-536795-9 \$13.99

Many are the books on accompanying singers since Gerald Moore first wrote his *The Unashamed Accompanist* but the only one to come anywhere close to it, let alone surpassing it in wit and wisdom, honesty and humanity, with the same sheer breadth of experience is Martin Katz's *The Complete Collaborator*. I would even go so far as to compare it to epoch-defining works such as *Der vollständige Kapellmeister* for the insights it gives us into many of the unavowed practices of our own day. The only difference is that in the intervening years (between Moore and Katz) the dignity of the poor downtrodden accompanist has shot up in the world from being a mere "accessory after the fact" – *unashamed* or not – to that of "partner". Thus Katz, at the same time as laying down a collaborative pianist's *vade mecum*, is boldly trying to