

Return of User Friendly Bassoon Tunes

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Note: This article was written in 2012. Prices are not current.

After several years of teaching, I became tired of teaching the same handful of easy pieces. An investigation was undertaken to broaden my knowledge of this repertoire. The result was “User Friendly Bassoon Tunes,” a session presented at the 1996 Conference at Florida State University. The resulting list of works was printed in *The Double Reed*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (1999). Largely due to the expansion of desktop publishing, many additional pieces had become available by 2008 when “User Friendly Bassoon Tunes – The Sequel” was presented at the 2008 Conference at Brigham Young University. The list of works from “The Sequel” was published in *The Double Reed*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (2009).

Since 2008 a remarkable amount of new material has become available, primarily from publishers specializing in music for double reeds. This material includes both newly composed music and older music that has been returned to print. While the interval since the last “User Friendly” session was offered is short, the wealth of new repertoire warranted the presentation of “Return of User Friendly Bassoon Tunes” at the 2012 Conference held at Miami University.

As with previous “User Friendly” articles, included in the list are some pieces which are very familiar. These have been included because they are good pieces and to offer the reader a point of reference in applying the difficulty ratings. Everything on this list I would be happy teaching or be pleased to have my students (or me) perform. However, a number of the less-familiar works stand out as deserving of more frequent performances. These works include Besozzi *Sonata in B-flat*, Braun *Solos*, concerti by Fiala and Rosetti, Flament *Elegie*, the Gatti pieces, Goepfert *Zwei Charakterstücke*, the Jancourt solos, Mendelssohn *Three Songs Without Words*, Neukircher *8 Etüden*, Rachmaninov *Do Not Sing, My Beauty*, the Tchaikovsky pieces, Clérisse *Notturmo*, Damase *Basson Junior*, Frankenpohl *Ballad and Waltz*, Head *Three Fantastic Pieces*, Janáček *Fifteen Moravian Folksongs*, Joubert *Cinq pièces faciles*, Longo *Suite*, and the collection *Classics to Please*. Additionally, the newly available Weissenborn solos merit special mention as do the compositions of Viennese bassoonist Anselma Veit.

Dr. Timothy Shafer, one of my piano colleagues at Penn State, provided the difficulty ratings for the piano parts. Jared Tidd, a graduate pianist at Miami University, joined with me to perform portions of twenty-two of these works at the 2012 Conference. I express my thanks to both of these gentlemen.

Bassoon Difficulty: 1 = easy, playable within the first year of study, 2 = expanded range, may include tenor clef, playable by good high school students, 3 = greater musical demands, playable by advanced high school students and university students.

Piano Difficulty: 1 = easy, playable by a young pianist, 2 = can be played well by an accomplished high school pianist and by an undergraduate pianist, 3 = playable by a good

undergraduate piano major. Any aspect of an accompaniment that is not “traditional piano writing” (i.e. rapid chord changes in baroque material), extensive use of accidentals, or rhythmic complexity raised the difficulty level.

Baroque

Bach, J.S. *Nun komm' der Heiden Heiland* (TrevCo) \$6.00. Bsn=2, Pno=2. Arranged by Trevor Cramer from the choral prelude BWV 659. A contrapuntal adagio movement.

Besozzi, Girolamo. *Sonata in B-flat Major* (Accolade) \$30.00. Bsn=2+, Pno=2. Edition by Dassonville. Effective 3-movement sonata with modest range requirements. Good keyboard realization. Rhythms in slow movement can be confusing due to small note values. Includes separate basso part. An older edition of this sonata edited by William Waterhouse and published by Oxford has become difficult to obtain.

Boismortier, Joseph Bodin de. *Suite of Pieces* (Shawnee Press, POD) \$ 12.00. Bsn=2, Pno=2+. Edited by Robert Thompson, realization by Thomas Trobaugh. Six dance movements from Op. 40. Good, thinly realized keyboard part. Clear editing, showing all editorial additions and original material. Every ornament is written out in a cued staff above the embellishment. No separate basso part. A less “urtext” edition of this suite, including additional movements, is published by Southern Music.

Boismortier, Joseph Bodin de. *Sonata in D, Op. 26, No. 1* (Benjamin Productions) \$15.00. Bsn=2+, Pno=2. Edition by Daryl Durran, realization by June Miller. A four-movement sonata of modest proportions. Thinly scored realization with minimal editorial additions. Includes separate basso part.

Braun, Jean Daniel. *Solos (1740)* (Schott) \$18.00. Bsn=1+ - 3. Edited by Jaroslav Capek. Collection of 28 individual movements for solo bassoon that emphasize technique across the half-hole and flicking registers and leaps between registers. While not grouped in any way, a few of these pieces performed as a suite can be effective. Six of these solos are contained in *30 Classic Studies* (Universal Edition).

Marais, Marin. *Les Folies d'Espagne* (Anselma Music) \$18.00. Bsn=1-3. Edition by Anselma Veit. Marais' version of this famous melody with 31 variations set for solo bassoon. The variations range from easy to virtuosic and encompass a wide range of styles. Effective material to return to repeatedly as a student progresses.

Zipoli, Domenico. *Aria* (TrevCo) \$6.00. Bsn=2+, Pno=2. From the composer's keyboard *Suite in B Minor*, arranged by Jacques van Lier, edited by Trevor Cramer. A lyrical largo movement in g minor notated in small note values.

Classical

Fiala, Joseph. *Concerto in C Major* (Edition Kunzelmann) \$26.00. Bsn= 2+, Pno= 2 . Edited by Karl Pojar. A short concerto of limited musical and technical demands. Cadenza is provided for the first movement. Much less challenging than the Mozart *Concerto*. Orchestra parts are available for purchase.

Haydn, Michael. *Concertino per Fagotto, Perger 52/5* (Doblinger) \$32.00. Bsn= 3-, Pno=2+. Edited by Werner Rainer. A lyrical adagio that served as a slow movement in a three-movement symphony or a longer serenade. Cadenza provided. Orchestra parts are available for purchase.

Mozart, W.A. *Der Hölle Rache* (TrevCo) \$6.00 Bsn=2+, Pno=1+. Arranged by Marc Vallon. This is the first section of the famous Queen of the Night's aria from *The Magic Flute*. It requires elegant detached articulation up to high C.

Rosetti, Antonio. *Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major, RWV C69* (Amadeus) \$32.00. Bsn=3, Pno=3. Edited by Johannes Moesus. One of five surviving bassoon concertos by Rossetti. No cadenzas are provided. A more substantial work than the *Fiala Concerto*, but again, less challenging than the *Mozart Concerto*. Orchestra parts are available for purchase.

Rosetti, Antonio. *Concerto No. 3 in F Major, RWV C75* (Amadeus) \$32.00. Bsn=3, Pno=3. Edited by Johannes Moesus. Another Rossetti concerto of about the scale of the *Fiala Concerto*. Orchestra parts are available for purchase.

Romantic

Beethoven, Ludwig van. *Lied aus der Ferne* (Editions Viento) \$9.25. Bsn=2, Pno=3. A straight-forward setting of the voice part for bassoon by George Zukerman. An attractive A-B-A structured song. Title translates as "Song from Far Away." No German text is supplied, only an English version of the text that appears to be a less than satisfactory translation.

Danzi, Franz. *Concerto in F Major* (Masters Music) \$15.00. Bsn=3, Pno=3-. One of five bassoon concerti by Danzi. Some florid writing for the soloist, but the keys and patterns are not difficult. Orchestra parts are available for purchase.

Flament, Edouard. *Élégie, Op. 1* (Prairie Dawg Press) \$10.00. Bsn=2, Organ=2. Edited by Bruce Gbur. An early, single-movement, Massenet-influenced work with organ accompaniment from bassoonist Flament..

Gatti, Nazzareno. *Capriccio per Fagotto* (TrevCo) \$17.00. Bsn=3, Pno=2. Edited by Steven Dibner. A short, lovely piece by a virtuoso bassoonist in the "bel canto" style with considerably fewer technical demands than required by most of this literature.

Gatti, Nazzareno. *Pensiero Melodico* (TrevCo) \$10.00. Bsn=3, Pno=2. Edited by Steven Dibner. Another attractive Gatti piece of similar style, length, and difficulty to the *Capriccio*.

Goepfert, Karl Eduard. *Zwei Charakterstücke, Op. 31* (Hofmeister) \$16.00. Bsn=3, Pno=3+. Two beautiful, lyrical pieces first published in the 1890's. This music has qualities of Reinecke and Schumann. Particularly effective use of the bassoon's wide range in this true chamber music piece.

Jancourt, Eugène. *Melodic Etude in E Minor, Op. 119* (Prairie Dawg Press) \$10.00. Bsn=3, Pno=3-. Edited by Bruce Gbur. This is the composer's accompanied version of his *Melodic Study No. 6*.

Jancourt, Eugène. *Reverie, Op. 61* (Prairie Dawg Press) \$10.00. Bsn=3, Pno=2-. Edited by Bruce Gbur. A salon piece requiring good control of the full range of the bassoon.

Jancourt, Eugène. *Romance san paroles, Op. 113* (Prairie Dawg Press) \$8.00. Bsn=2+, Pno=2. Edited by Bruce Gbur. This work is Jancourt's *Melodic Study No.15* with piano accompaniment provided by the composer.

Massenet, Jules. *Lent et sombre* (TrevCo) \$5.00. Bsn=2, Pno=1+. This beautifully expressive 19-measure piece in b-flat minor was the sight reading exam piece for the Paris

Conservatoire's concours of 1882. The now out-of-print *Sight-reading Pieces for Bassoon and Piano* (Universal Edition) also contains this piece.

Mendelssohn, Felix. *Three Songs Without Words* (TrevCo) \$12.00. Bsn=3, Pno=3-. Arranged by Marc Vallon. Includes Op. 53, No. 2, "An Fräulein Doris Loewe" (both originally for piano) and Op. 109 (originally for cello and piano, here lowered a step to C major). Lovely pieces, well arranged.

Milde, Ludwig. *Concertino* (Universal Edition) \$17.00. Bsn=3, Pno=3-. Edited by William Waterhouse. Single movement work, sectionalized by contrasting material, rather than tempo. Contains both lyrical material and passage work that recalls the composer's scale and chord studies. Good facility is required for an effective performance.

Neukirchner, Wenzel. *8 Etüden* (Accolade) \$26.00. Bsn=3 - 3+, Pno=1+ - 2+. First published in the early 1860s, these accompanied etudes by an important bassoonist and teacher are more concert studies than simply technical exercises. Includes both fast and slow pieces.

Rachmaninov, Sergei. *Do Not Sing, My Beauty* (TrevCo) \$10.00. Bsn=2, Pno=2+. Arranged by Richard Cionco, edited by Scott Pool. This is the very beautiful *Ne poy, krasavitsa, pri mne* (Sing not to me, beautiful maiden), No. 4 from *Six Songs, Op. 4*.

Saint-Saëns, Camille. *The Swan* (TrevCo) \$8.00. Bsn=2, Pno=1. Arnold Irchai has arranged this famous cello solo from *Carnival of the Animals*.

Tchaikovsky, Pyotr I. *Barcarole* [sic] (TrevCo) \$10.00. Bsn=2+, Pno=2. Arranged by Loren Glickman. This work is "June" from *The Seasons, Op.37a*, a set of 12 pieces for piano. Marked "Andante cantabile," this g-minor movement requires control of the upper register but only at modest speeds.

Tchaikovsky, Pyotr I. *Nocturno* (TrevCo) \$10.00. Bsn=3, Pno=2. Arranged by Loren Glickman. Work comes from the *6 Morceau, Op. 19* for piano. An "andante sentimental" movement requiring a 3-octave range, but not rapid technique.

Traditional. *Deep River* (TrevCo) \$5.00. Bsn=2-, Pno=1. Arranged by Tevor Cramer. A traditionally harmonized setting of this African-American spiritual.

Weissenborn, Julius. *Adagio, Op. 9, No. 3* (TrevCo) \$8.00. Bsn=3-, Pno=2+. A lyrical piece in A-flat major with range up to high B-flat. Some musical maturity required for an effective performance.

Weissenborn, Julius. *Arioso and Humoreske* (International) \$9.00. Bsn=1, Pno= 2-. The very beautiful Arioso requires smooth response across the half-hole break. The Humoreske in F Major requires little facility, containing mostly easy arpeggio figures. Editions from other publishers are also available.

Weissenborn, Julius. *Capriccio* (Southern Music) \$17.00. Bsn=2, Pno=2+. Edited by Robert Williams. An allegro movement in rondo form with contrasting lyrical material, including an effective hemiola section. Editions from other publishers are also available usually identifying the piece as Op. 14. Chris Weait has arranged the accompaniment for both chamber orchestra and wind ensemble. No. 17 of the Tone and Performance Studies.

Weissenborn, Julius. *Elegie* (Southern Music) \$4.00. Bsn=3-, Pno=2+. Edited by Robert Williams. A dramatic Grave movement in f minor that effectively utilizes the wide range of the bassoon. No. 10 of the Tone and Performance Studies, formerly Op. 10, No. 3.

Weissenborn, Julius. *Fünfkleine Stücke* (Hofmeister) \$14.00. Bsn=1, Pno=1. Edited by William Waterhouse. Five short pieces similar in length and difficulty to the *Arioso and Humoreske*, harmonized with Weissenborn's usual skill.

Weissenborn, Julius. *Romance No. 1* (Southern Music) \$5.00. Bsn=3-, Pno=2. Edited by Robert Williams. An andante movement with contrasting faster sections. More lovely music from Weissenborn. No. 16 of the Tone and Performance Studies, formerly Op. 10, No. 2, and a different piece than the *Romance, Op. 3* published by International.

Weissenborn, Julius. *Song without Words* (Southern Music) \$4.00. Bsn=2, Pno=2. Edited by Robert Williams. A 46-measure, lyrical piece demanding little facility but requiring control of the range above the bass clef staff. No. 9 of the Tone and Performance Studies, formerly Op. 10, No. 1.

20th/21st Century

Arrieu, Claude. *Rusticana* (Amphion) \$12.00. Bsn=2-, Pno=2-. A short, jaunty, 20-measure piece of moderate tempo with both detached and legato playing in the upper half of the bassoon's range.

Avni, Boaz. *Andante Amoroso* (TrevCo) \$8.00. Bsn=2-, Pno=2. A short, expressive andante movement with a traditionally harmonized, but interestingly written, accompaniment that shares the melody with the soloist.

Avni, Boaz. *Sonata* (TrevCo) \$20.00. Bsn=2+ - 3, Pno=3. A much more substantial work, employing a more varied harmonic palette, than the *Andante Amoroso*. This three-movement sonata provides plenty of musical interest for both the bassoon and piano.

Benson, Warren. *Song and Dance* (Boosey & Hawkes) \$10.00. Bsn=2-, Pno=2. A short piece in A-B-A' form. Interesting sonorities and rhythms, including mixed meters at the quarter-note level.

Clérisse, Robert. *Notturmo* (Leduc) \$19.00. Bsn=3, Pno=2. A 5 ½-minute andante movement in compound meter with long flowing phrases in the bassoon part.

Damase, Jean-Michael. *Basson Junior* (Editions Henry Lemoine) \$23.00 Bsn= 2, Pno=2+. Flowing waltz melody in one to the bar, attractively harmonized with quartal sonorities.

Douglas, Bill. *Eight Easy Lyrical Pieces* (TrevCo) \$24.00. Bsn=2+ - 3, Pno=1+. Typical of the composer's attractive, popular music-influenced style with singing melodies in the tenor register. Much less difficult than Douglas' other works for bassoon.

Faith, Richard. *Suite* (Southern Music) \$6.50. Bsn=3, Pno=3. Five short movements in a very conservative contemporary style. Piano part is not densely written. Good mix of styles, character, and meters. The last movement presents the greatest technical and ensemble challenges.

Frackenhohl, Arthur. *Concerto for Bassoon and Band* (Editions Viento) \$16.00. Bsn=3, Pno=3. An attractive three-movement, 13-minute concerto written in 1958. From the piano reduction it appears that the piece is well written to allow the bassoon to be heard when performed with band. Last movement is variations on *Pop Goes the Weasel*.

Frankenhohl, Arthur. *Ballad and Waltz* (Editions Viento) \$11.00. Bsn=3, Pno=3. Bassoon part edited by Bruce Gbur. "Claude Bolling-esque" classical-jazz crossover style. Also available in a version for bassoon and harp.

Head, Michael. *Three Fantastic Pieces* (Emerson Edition) \$18.00. Bsn=3, Pno=3-. Movements are Clouds, Haunted House, and Happy Go-Lucky. A chamber music piece requiring a wide range of dynamics, colors, and coordination through tempo changes. Effective programmatic music.

Heiden, Berhard. *Adagio for Bassoon and Piano* (Prairie Dawg Press) \$15.00. Bsn=3-, Pno=3. Edited by Bruce Gbur. Adapted from the solo bassoon movement from Heiden's *Concerto for Small Orchestra*, which also features solo movements for oboe and trumpet. Very "Hindemithian" in style.

Isaacson, Michael. *Lullaby* (TrevCo) \$8.00. Bsn=2-, Pno=2. A moderate speed lyrical melody that includes plenty of rests. Attractive, creatively written accompaniment.

Jacob, Gordon. *Four Sketches* (Emerson Edition) \$20.00. Bsn=1+, Pno=1+. Short, charming pieces, including "L'Apres-midi d'un Dinosaur." Limited in range, but requiring good projection of character and some staccato tonguing in the "Polka."

Janáček, Leos. *Fifteen Moravian Folksongs* (TrevCo) \$16.00. Bsn=3-, Pno=3-. Originally for piano and voice, these short, evocative songs from 1922 have been arranged by Trevor Cramer. Unusual material with lots of variety.

Joubert, Claude-Henry. *Cinq pièces faciles* (Editions Robert Martin) \$16.00. Bsn=2. Solo bassoon. The one-minute movements are Prelude, Petite fugue, Sarabande, Menuet, and Gigue. Good melodic and rhythmic interest with limited range and technical demands.

Longo, Alessandro. *Suite, Op. 69* (TrevCo) \$12.00. Bsn=3, Pno=3. First published in 1915, the work is written a conservative, tonal style. Movements are: Andante with variations, Romanza, and Vivace. A chamber music piece with extensive interplay between the bassoon and piano.

Lussier, Mathieu. *Bassango* (TrevCo) \$15.00. Bsn=2+, Pno=2. This terrific tango piece is also available scored for bassoon and strings and for 3 bsns and contra.

Niverd, Lucien. *Romance Sentimentale* (TrevCo) \$4.00. Bsn=2-, Pno=1. No. 2 from the composer's *Six petites pièces de style*. A short A-B-A form movement with traditional harmonies. Includes solo parts for bassoon and english horn.

Niverd, Lucien. *Scherzetto* (TrevCo) \$4.00. Bsn=2-, Pno=1+. No. 6 from the composer's *Six petites pièces de style*. A short movement marked "Vif et léger" requiring moderately fast staccato articulation in the middle register.

d'Ollone, Max. *Romance et Tarentelle* (Prairie Dawg Press) \$13.00. Bsn=3, Pno=2+. Edited by Bruce Gbur. Composed for the Paris Conservatoire's concours of 1928. An expressive andante opening section followed by an allegro in 6/8 time. Not as difficult as later concours pieces (Tansman, Boutry, etc.).

Satie, Erik. *Three Gymnopédie* (TrevCo) \$12.00. Bsn=2+, Pno=1. Adapted by Trevor Cramer. Three expressive slow movements containing simple notes and rhythms in the tenor register. A very similar arrangement is available from T.D. Ellis Music Publishing.

Veit, Anselma. *À la Française* (Anselma Music) \$25.00. Bsn=3, Pno=2. Three pieces – Danse des Parapluies, Ballade de la Coccinelle and Tango du Chat – that recall Claude Bolling's work.

Veit, Anselma. *Bassalsa* (Anselma Music) \$24.00. Bsn (low ver.)=1+ (high ver.)=2, Pno=2. A swinging latin tune that includes a choice of solo parts written an octave apart.

Veit, Anselma. *Cantigas brasileiras* (Anselma Music) \$28.00. Bsn=2-, Pno=2. Three latin pieces - Pequeno poema, Pequena diversão and Pequeno sonho - with the bassoon's range primarily in the bass clef staff.

Veit, Anselma. *Danses solitaires* (Anselma Music) \$24.00. Bsn=3. Three unaccompanied dances – Tango solitario, Chorinho and Musette – that avoid the extreme registers of the instrument. Attractive and well written, these pieces are less difficult than the Mignone *Waltzes*, but do require good endurance.

Veit, Anselma. *Little Preludes* (Anselma Music) \$24.00. Bsn=2+. Five pieces for solo bassoon in contrasting meters and styles. Moderate requirements of range and technique with particular attention to the half-hole and flicking registers.

Veit, Anselma. *Little Toccatas* (Anselma Music) \$20.00. Bsn=2. Five studies for solo bassoon of varying character. Modest requirements of range and technique. Less difficult than the *Little Preludes*.

Veit, Anselma. *Salsa con mi tinta* (Anselma Music) \$23.00. Bsn(low ver.)=2- (high ver.)=2+, Pno=2. More salsa, again with a choice of ranges for the bassoonist. Both versions have a few measures with rapid scales.

Veit, Anselma. *Son Cubano* (Anselma Music) \$20.00. Bsn=2, Pno=2. A slow latin tune where the bassoon and piano share melodic material.

Weinberger, Jaromír. *Sonatine* (TrevCo) \$6.00. Bsn=2, Pno=2. A chamber music piece with considerable interplay between the bassoon and piano. Piece is in two sections; an Allegro moderato followed by a Ronda à la Polka.

Collections

Bassoon Solos (Chester Music) Vol. 1 \$24.00, Vol. 2 \$30.00. Bsn=2 - 3, Pno=3-. Edited by William Waterhouse. Each volume contains individual movements from original bassoon pieces, set for bassoon and piano, from a range of historical periods. Vol. 1 includes, in part, Milde's *Three Easy Pieces* and music by Merci, Corrette, Amon, and Mozart. Vol. 2 includes, in part, Jancourt's *Romance sans Paroles* and music by Galliard, Jacobi, Devienne, and Mozart.

Classics to Please (Hofmeister) \$22.00. Bsn=1 - 2+, Pno1 - 3-. Twenty-one fine arrangements by Sergio Azzolini of music by Frescobaldi, Bach, Marcello, Telemann, Vivaldi, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven and Rossini.

Das Fagott (Vol. 5) (Deutscher Verlag für Musik) \$38.00. Bsn=1 - 3, Pno=1+ - 3+. Part of Werner Seltmann and Gunther Angerhofer's six-volume bassoon tutor, this volume contains 28 works from all periods and levels of difficulty. Included, in part, is music by Pivonka, Bruns, Boismortier, Galliard, Bertoli, Miroshnikow, Amon, and Spohr.

Fagottmuzika (Editio Musica Budapest) \$26.00. Bsn=1 - 3, Pno=2 - 3. Edited by László Hara. A collection of 39 pieces including leier, Italian songs, baroque dance movements and many more pieces that you will recognize. Composers represented include, in part, Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, and Schubert.

Going Solo (Faber Music) \$12.00. Bsn=1 - 2, Pno=2 - 3-. Twelve arrangements by Graham Sheen of music by Farnaby, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Grieg, Bizet, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Bartok. Includes orchestra bassoon solos set in lower keys. All pieces are short.

New Pieces for Bassoon (2 vols.) (Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music) \$14.00 each vol. Bsn=1 - 3, Pno=2 - 3. Original works commissioned by the Royal Schools. Single-movement works by Gordon Jacob, Bryan Kelly and others. Volume 1 contains eleven pieces, Vol. 2. contains eight pieces. The more difficult material is in Vol. 2.

Three Opera Favorites (TrevCo) \$6.00. Bsn=2, Pno=2. Arranged by Marc Vallon. Short settings of Verdi's "Grand March" from *Aida*, Mozart's "Non piu andrai" from *Marriage of Figaro*, and Bizet's "Toréador Song" from *Carmen*.