

## SHEET MUSIC &amp; BOOKS

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### DOGS AND BIRDS: NURSERY RHYMES AND FAMOUS MELODIES

ELZA AND CHRIS LUSHER

DOGSANDBIRDS.CO.UK, £9.95

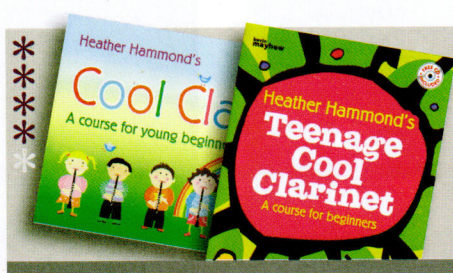
*This systematic, Kodály-influenced approach uses excellent familiar folk and classical material*

This beautiful colour-illustrated spiral-bound book with 23 simple piano arrangements would be a valuable addition to any young pianist's music bag. The book forms part of the Dogs and Birds series, which has been developed to teach very young children (three to seven years) the piano. Each note is represented by a different animal, for example, D for Dog and B for bird. Children sing the symbols (at correct pitch) before they play the notation. There are two versions of the Nursery Rhymes and Famous Melodies book – one in standard notation and the other in animal notation, with the symbol incorporated in the note.

Great for sight-reading practice (for students of all ages), each melody – in easy-to-read large notation – is accompanied by a rhythm exercise for right and left hands to pat on the knees (I'd advise hands separately first, then together – even adults can find this challenging). Repertoire includes Twinkle Twinkle, Hot Cross Buns, Frère Jacques (in D, so an F# is introduced) and the beginning of Beethoven's Für Elise, to name but a few. Progression starts from one hand only, building to simple accompaniments of just one repeated note right through to the broken chords in Für Elise.

There is no fingering – this is addressed in the second method book – and the repeat signs and coda markings did cause a little confusion. But overall, this systematic, Kodály-influenced approach uses excellent familiar folk and classical material which my students truly loved. To see other materials in the series visit the website.

Reviewed by Karen Marshall



### COOL CLARINET, TEENAGE COOL CLARINET

HEATHER HAMMOND

KEVIN MAYHEW, FROM £6.99

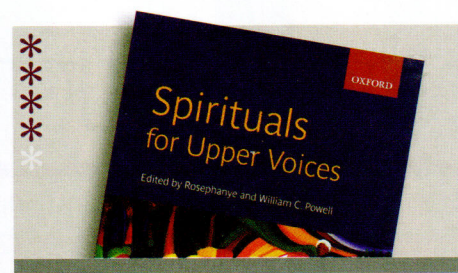
*These well-produced books will prove popular with teachers*

Heather Hammond's Funky Flute series is said to be fast becoming the country's leading flute tutor. No surprise, then, that in this new series of books Hammond's approach has now been adapted for the clarinet. No fewer than 14 volumes are offered, all with bright, glossy covers and clear, well-set music systems. In Book One of Cool Clarinet, interest is maintained by use of well-known tunes, cartoons, games, a crossword, line drawings to illustrate fingerings, a progress certificate and so on. For the most part, piano accompaniments have a simple three-part texture, and graded musical and technical information is clearly presented.

Specifically, there are eight books of Cool Clarinet for younger learners and six books of Teenage Cool Clarinet; the other volumes are for the teacher, or provide extra repertoire for the student. The books take the young clarinetist up to about ABRSM Grade 3 level. Some teachers have expressed doubts as to how nine- to 11-year-olds would regard the illustrations in the younger edition, which in the early books look more suited to piano or recorder tutors aimed at infants.

In the early stages, one of the principal challenges for clarinet teachers is to provide sufficient repertoire which uses only a few notes. In book one of Cool Clarinet, Hammond delays the appearance of a second note until page 17. One wonders whether this is too long. Admittedly, given a choice between going too quickly or offering a large amount of material, the latter is preferable; after all, one can always skip ahead. These well-produced books will prove popular with teachers for their quantity of repertoire alone. Well worth considering.

Reviewed by John Robert Brown



### SPIRITUALS FOR UPPER VOICES

ED. ROSEPHANYE AND WILLIAM C. POWELL

OUP, £9.95

*Any upper-voice choir of at least intermediate standard will find pieces to interest them here*

All too often, choir directors find themselves hurriedly rearranging their mixed-voice choir music for use with upper-voice groups. Help is at hand in the form of 12 new arrangements of well-known and some lesser-known spirituals for upper voices.

Predominantly written by American arrangers who specialise in African-American folksong, the book's scholarship is sound. The detailed preface is particularly good, contextualising the songs and texts and offering guidance for performance in a classical style without ignoring tricky decisions about delivery and pronunciation.

The spirituals are arranged for various combinations of soprano and alto, mainly SA and SSA with occasional further divisi. Around half the arrangements have specially composed piano parts rather than just rehearsal parts. Generally speaking, the up-tempo numbers (such as This joy I have and In dat great gettin' up mornin') work better than the slower tunes, incorporating more 'typical' gospel sound and harmonies. The exception to this is a beautifully gentle a cappella setting of There is a Balm in Gilead. A rather oversentimental setting of Deep River seems a little wide of the mark, however. Solos, such as that in I'm Gonna Sing, are often quite substantial and will challenge the most able singers.

Due to the intricacy of some of the harmonic writing, these arrangements will probably be of most use to slightly older choirs who read music, but any upper-voice choir of at least intermediate standard will find pieces to interest them here.

Reviewed by Felicity Hayward