

# Bet You Can't Play with One Hand!

2019 MTNA National Conference  
Spokane, WA

## History and Background

### Four Categories for One-Hand Literature<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. Technical Development

- Two hand works such as Rachmaninoff's *Prelude in B-flat Major*, Op. 23, No. 2 and Chopin's *Etude in C minor*, Op. 10, No. 12 "Revolutionary"
- Beren's *Training of the Left Hand*, Op. 89 (Schirmer)
- Czerny's *Twenty-Four Piano Studies for Left Hand*, Op. 718 (Schirmer)

#### 2. Compositional Challenge

- Leopold Godowsky's *Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes from the Gypsy Baron*: <https://youtu.be/Ja5Obwrn0GE>
- Felix Blumenfeld's *Etude*: <https://youtu.be/F2XUptZLS08>
- John Corigliano's *Etude Fantasy*, Etude No. 1: <https://youtu.be/J9GG3LOhp-g>

#### 3. Displays of Virtuosity in Concert

- Bartók's *Etude for Left Hand* achieved great success in Berlin in 1903
- Godowsky had similar success in Berlin in 1900 with his *Chopin Paraphrases*

#### 4. Injury

- Gary Graffman (b. 1928) and Leon Fleisher (b. 1928) have suffered from focal dystonia, a condition that causes uncontrollable curling of the fingers
- Graffman commissioned Ned Rorem's *Piano Concerto No. 4* and William Bolcom's *Gaea*, a concerto for two pianos, the other part written for Fleisher

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<sup>1</sup> Theodore Edel, *Piano Music for One Hand* (Indiana University Press, 1994), 3-34.

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## Four Important One-Handed Pianists

1. Alexander Dreyschock (1818-1869)
  - Had two capable hands but was interested in developing the left hand
  - Known for ability to play thirds, sixths, and octaves in the left hand
  - Composed *Variations on God Save the Queen* which is almost unplayable
2. Adolfo Fumagalli (1828-1856)
  - Italian pianist also had two capable hands but achieved success on the concert stage in Paris by playing his *Fantasy* on Meyerbeer's opera, *Robert le Diable*.
  - Composed a left-hand arrangement of Bellini's aria *Casta Diva* from *Norma*
3. Géza Zichy (1849-1924)
  - Lost his right arm in a hunting accident at age 15
  - Gave a recital in Berlin in 1915 to injured WWI veterans
  - Concert career supported by Liszt
  - Composed two sets of etudes, a *Sonata*, and a *Hungarian Rhapsody*
4. Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961)
  - Family part of Vienna's elite society; family home hosted concerts by Brahms and Clara Schumann
  - Studied with Leschetizky
  - Suffered an injury in WWI resulting in the amputation of his right arm
  - Commissioned many works by leading composers
    - Benjamin Britten's *Diversions for Piano Left Hand and Orchestra*, Op. 21
    - Paul Hindemith's *Klaviermusik*, Op. 29
    - Erich Korngold's *Piano Concerto for the Left Hand in C-sharp*, Op. 17
    - Sergei Prokofiev's *Piano Concerto No. 4*, Op. 53
    - Maurice Ravel's *Piano Concerto for the Left Hand*
    - Richard Strauss' *Parergon*, Op. 73

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## Survey of Literature for One Hand Alone

### Educational Literature

Note: Selections in bold are highlighted today

Level	Collection	Composer
1	Either/Or (RH or LH)—Belwin	Joyce Grill
1	<b>The Ocean Deep</b> (RH or LH)—Alfred	Kathleen Massoud
1	On the Other Hand...(RH or LH)—FJH	John Robert Poe
1	Look Ma, One Hand (RH or LH)—Kjos	John Robert Poe
1	Lefty's Cool Strut (LH)—Alfred	Catherine Rollin
1-2	<b>Grand One-Hand Solos, Book I</b> (RH and LH)—Alfred	Melody Bober
1-2	<b>Grand One-Hand Solos, Book II</b> (RH and LH)—Alfred	Melody Bober
2	<b>Waltzing in My Sneakers</b> (RH)—Alfred	Barbara Martysak
2-3	<b>For Left Hand Alone, Book I</b> (LH)—Willis	John Thompson
3	Popcorn for Breakfast (LH)—Belwin	Barbara Martysak
3	<b>Grand One-Hand Solos, Book III</b> (RH and LH)—Alfred	Melody Bober
3	Evening Air (LH or HT)—Alfred	Ethel Rogers
3-4	<b>For Left Hand Alone, Book II</b> (LH)—Willis	John Thompson
3-4	Spanish Sunset (RH)—Alfred	Randall Hartsell
3-4	<b>Hey Look!...One Hand!</b> (RH and LH)—Willis	Elaine Lebar
3-4	Left Hand Solos—Classical Themes (LH)—Alfred	John Schaum
4	Between Two Lands (RH)—Alfred	Sharon Aaronson
4	Prelude for Right Hand Alone (RH)—Willis	John Branson
4	<b>Grand One-Hand Solos, Book IV</b> (RH and LH)—Alfred	Melody Bober
4	<b>Grand One-Hand Solos, Book V</b> (RH and LH)—Alfred	Melody Bober
4	Blue Mood (RH or LH)—Alfred	Margaret Goldston
4	Left Alone—Right On! (RH or LH)—Alfred	Joyce Grill
4	New Horizon (RH)—Alfred	Randal Hartsell
4	Shadow Waltz (LH)—Alfred	Hilda Hulbert Tanner
4	Vagabond Clouds (LH)—Alfred	Judy East Wells
4	Left's Turn Only (LH)—Alfred	Robert Vandall

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4-5	More Left Alone—Right On! (RH or LH)—Belwin	Joyce Grill
5	Peaceful Hearts (RH)—Alfred	Dennis Alexander
5	Leftover Calypso (LH)—Alfred	Judith Maggs
5	Nocturne for Left Hand (LH)—Alfred	Catherine Rollin
5	<b>Left Hand Solos, Book II</b> (LH)—Alfred	John Schaum
5-6	<b>Grand One-Hand Solos, Book VI</b> (RH and LH)—Alfred	Melody Bober
6	Arioso (RH)—Alfred	Dennis Alexander
6	<b>Elegy</b> (LH)—Alfred	Dennis Alexander
6	Serenidad (LH)—FJH	Mary Leaf
6	<b>Midnight Blues</b> (LH)—Alfred	Carol Matz
6	Rhapsody (LH)—Alfred	Martha Mier
6	<b>Excursions</b> (RH)—Alfred	Martha Mier
6-7	<b>Hands Separately</b> (RH and LH)—Kjos	Eugénie Rocherolle
7-8	<b>Three Preludes</b> (RH)—Alfred	Ryan Brachmacher
9	<b>Journey</b> (RH)—Alfred	Robert Vandall
10	<b>Consolation in D-flat Major</b> (RH)—Alfred	Dennis Alexander

## Standard Literature

### Collection

- *Piano Music for One Hand*, Ed. Raymond Lewenthal (Schirmer)

### Solo Works for Left Hand (Available on [imslp.org](http://imslp.org) unless otherwise noted)

- Bach, C.P.E: *Klavierstücke in A*
- Berger, Ludwig: *Etudes*, Op. 12
- Blumenfeld, Felix: *Etude in A-flat*, Op. 36
- Bortkiewicz, Sergei: *Etude in F-sharp*, Op. 12, No. 5
- Bowen, York: *Curiosity Suite*, Op. 42
- Dreyschock, Alexander: *Variations on God Save the Queen*, Op. 129; *Variations*, Op. 22
- Fumagalli, Adolfo: *Casta Diva*, Op. 61; *Fantasie on Robert le Diable*, Op. 106
- Godowsky, Leopold: *Studies on Chopin's Etudes; Meditation; Six Waltz Poems, Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes from The Gypsy Baron*
- **Hersch, Fred: *Three Character Studies, No. 1 Nocturne (Peters)***
- Moszkowsky, Moritz: *12 Etudes*, Op. 92
- Ponce, Manuel: *Prelude and Fugue*
- Reger, Max: *Four Special Studies*
- Reinecke, Carl: *Sonata in C minor*, Op. 179

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- Reinhold, Hugo: *Three Etudes*, Op. 61
- Saint-Saëns, Camille: *Six Etudes*, Op. 135
- Scriabin, Alexander: *Prelude and Nocturne*, Op. 9
- Wittgenstein, Paul: *School for the Left Hand*, Vols. I-III
- Zichy, Géza: *Sonata, Six Etudes*

## Solo Works for Right Hand

- ***Piano Suite for the Right Hand*, Soulima Stravinsky (Peters)**

## Bibliography

Edel, Theodore. *Piano Music for One Hand*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994.

## Online Resources

Piano Music for Left Hand Alone by Hans Brofeldt: <http://www.left-hand-brofeldt.dk>

Archiving Project for Left Hand Piano Music by Takeo Tchinai:  
<http://lefthandpianomusic.org/>