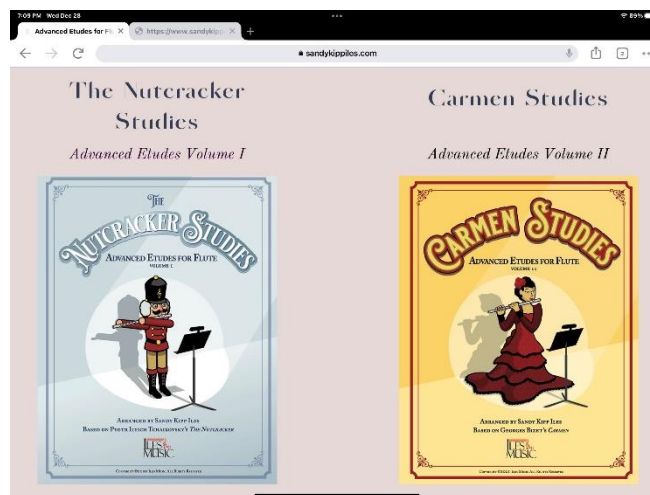




The Nutcracker Studies, Vol. 1 from the Advanced Etudes for Flute series. Based on Tchaikovsky's ballet The Nutcracker. Arranged and compiled by [Sandy Kipps Iles](https://www.sandykippsiles.com/)

Reviewed by GPFS Member BJ Nicoletti



Learn more: [www.sandykippsiles.com/advanced-etudes-for-flute](https://www.sandykippsiles.com/advanced-etudes-for-flute)

Click here for a free sample from her most recent etude book: [www.sandykippsiles.com/](https://www.sandykippsiles.com/)

**This is a clever, thoughtful, fun, refreshing, entertaining and challenging book of etudes for the more advanced flutist. Compiled by the experienced and passionate pedagogist and flutist Sandy Kipps Iles, it is no wonder it is so.** Going into the holidays, I spent some time reading through this robust collection and, most certainly, didn't make it through completely.

This volume offers sixteen etudes. Each one has an introduction that explains what is occurring on the stage at the time of the music as well as her comments about the musicality and technical aspects of the etudes. Sometimes she provides little rhythmic or technical exercises to prepare you for the challenge of the etude.

While I have listened to *The Nutcracker* music for decades, I wasn't that familiar with the Nutcracker story or the music itself, so it was satisfying to have so much of the music given to me as the flutist, the music insightfully explained and the context of the music set. Most incredibly, the etudes gave me a chance to be the soloist for all scenes of the ballet. We even get a chance to play the well-known harp solo from the *Waltz of the Flowers*.

The book took me through all the stages of the ballet from Act One and Act Two. Each of the studies draws from other melodic lines in the ballet, not just the flute part, so these feel like a solo study versus an orchestral excerpt.

Short of having the actual opportunity to play in the orchestra of *The Nutcracker* ballet itself or listening to a recording while studying the score (over and over) or simply learning the flute part - THIS IS the way to deeply acquaint yourself with the ballet itself - for your own fun and challenge or to prepare to play the ballet or stay in shape to do so.

My favorite - Act Two, the "character dances of the ballet" - "a celebration that consists of dances inspired from around the world" - Land of Sweets Spanish Dance/Chocolate, Arabian Dance/Coffee (in the actual score the flute gets to play very little on this one, so this is a treat and, as she points out, a good challenge for breathing and intonation control while staying within the character of the music), Chinese Dance/Tea. The entire ballet is musically interesting and energetic, and - of course - dance-like throughout. These are a complete joy to play.

In the words of one reviewer, Paula Robison, "How can we as flutists infuse our playing with magic and delight? This treasure of a collection gives us the answer."

From Jim Walker - "I can highly recommend Sandy's Nutcracker Studies to any flutist who is going to be playing this universally loved ballet, whether you are a 'newbie' or you're a Nutcracker veteran. Bravo."

I think the book is very suitable for the more advanced high school student through undergraduate and graduate level work. The etudes are challenging overall because most use the full range of the flute along with challenging tempos. Like any strong etude collection, this one provides a set of etudes that helps the flutist develop specific skills in addition to enjoying bringing the music to life.

I so appreciated her deep knowledge and comprehensive approach to these etudes that I bought her newest collection - *Carmen Studies, Vol. II* from the Advanced Etudes for Flute series. This volume is based on Bizet's opera Carmen.

To date, she has four additional volumes planned:

- Peter and the Wolf Studies: Advanced Etudes for Flute Volume III
- Warmups for Those Who Hate Warmups
- Advancing Technique for the Intermediate Player
- Step-by-Step Series: A Guide to Developing Flute Technique

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