

Selected Works for Solo Piano

Poems for Piano (2022-24)

This is an ongoing set of short pieces for piano, written in honor of the retirement of Jackie-Edwards Henry. They can be selected in any order and played in sets designed by the performer. If one wishes to perform all the pieces, I will not stand in the way.....some of the poems are specific salutes to important composers from the past. Others have been composed to advance a certain mood or idea.

Impish: a quick, one-page comic turn, loosely based on a synthetic scale. The piece is full of disjointed motion and rapid contrasts.

Haunting: a Chopin-like nocturne movement, with more contemporary harmonies. The arpeggiated accompaniment in the left hand suggests calm, but somehow, the piece is more unsettling in overall style.

Calm, Serene: a tribute to Claude Debussy that employs the opening gesture of Clair de Lune as the basis for a larger prelude.

Fast and Nervous: another composer tribute, this time to Dmitri Shostakovich. The composer's signature motive (B-C-A-G#) is used constantly in this fast and intense piece, appearing in a number of guises. The style may remind one of a furious invention, a tribute to Bach, a composer that Shostakovich admired greatly.

Slowly, with expression: A slow, hymn-like prelude, that is somber but expressive. Lightly chromatic at times, the piece reveals its central tonality only gradually.

Prelude on a Familiar Tune (2000)

Commissioned by Jackie-Edwards Henry, to be performed as a companion piece/response to the Prelude in C# Minor, Op. 45, by Chopin. The tune Londonderry Air is featured; motives from this well know English folk tune bear a resemblance to a theme that is developed in the Chopin prelude.

Three Pieces for Piano (1995)

Commissioned by pianist Joel Harrison as a set. The commission called for a series of pieces for solo piano that used hymn tunes in some fashion. The pieces are not chorale preludes; the hymn tunes or hymn tune fragments are used as subtext, enhancing the meaning of the overall composition.

Variations on a Mode: The mode is Phrygian; the piece weaves together a set of variations on the pitches of this famous scale, as opposed to an initial theme. Fragments of the Third Mode tune by Thomas Tallis begin to accumulate; gradually, more and more of this hymn tune commands attention.

Nocturne: A quiet, delicate, Chopin esque movement, one that is inspired by *Ar Hyd y Nos*, a Welsh folksong that some people associate with the text *All Through the Night*. The tune is heard prominently in the A sections of the work, the first of

which follows an atmospheric introduction. A contrasting B section has fragments of the tune, but also is a gentle reminder of the time of day. This piece also exists in a modified form in my Piano Trio, 2006. (*see Instrumental Works*)

Invention: The title says it all; a light-hearted, two-part invention for piano, modeled after J.S. Bach, but with the sensibilities of more contemporary composers such as Webern and Cage. Expect to hear silence as a compositional element, not to mention more extreme octave registers. German Lutheran hymn fragments abound, most notably *Lord Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word*. A revised version of this piece was completed in 2012; a chamber version is featured in my *Piano Trio*, 2006. (See Chamber works)

Buxton Farm (1982)

Years ago, I participated in a fund-raiser for the Cincinnati Composers Forum. A member of the group devised a unique offer: for a total price of \$32.95, anyone could commission a Cincinnati Composers Forum member to write a short piece as a gift for someone of the buyer's choice. The performance medium and level of difficulty was to be determined by the buyer as well.

There was a quick turn-around time for this product, as it was a fund-raising scheme for the holidays. I received my "commission" on a Monday, and had to have the piece composed, copies and ready for a recording session by the following Saturday! My assignment: to write a piece for solo piano, in a down-home style that would bear the following title: *Buxton Farm*. Oh yes, they also wanted flash; something virtuosic.

With six days to create this little masterpiece, I knew that I had to rely on my own four years of college piano, yet make it sound like I had more experience than that. A simple ternary form developed, with various tunes quoted, à la Charles Ives. Expect to hear *Old McDonald had a Farm*, *Turkey in the Straw*, and whatnot. In case you are wondering: I did make the deadline, and the rest is history! The piece now exists in its original solo version, plus a second one for piano two-hands.

Works for Solo Accordion

Waltz for Pablo (2015)

This waltz is a compendium of themes and motives used in a theatrical production of *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, by Steve Martin. Music was required to introduce Picasso early in the play upon his arrival at the café. In creating this music, I decided to salute Igor Stravinsky, one of Picasso's peers from the era. Motives from all three of the composer's famous ballets (*The Firebird*, *Petruška*, *The Rite of Spring*) are used prominently, blending in with other material supplied by this composer. All of this is presented in a French café-like style.

Toccata and Polka in D Minor (2001)

The title alone should warn the listener sufficiently. A tribute to serious accordionists everywhere, especially those who first learned the classics by playing them on the accordion! The famous Bach *Toccata and Fugue in D Minor* is fodder for this concert piece, but if you listen carefully, there are strains of a certain well-known polka that will appear as well.