***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 had the piece composed, copies and ready for a recoding 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, a 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, Petruhska, 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.