

CARTER  
**PANN**

The Piano's  
12 Sides

## PROGRAM NOTES by the composer

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In the summer of 2011 Joel Hastings and I were talking on the phone (our seasonal call), and I proposed writing a book of twelve solo works for him to perform as a set sometime in the near future. The idea struck me in that instant as one of the best musical ideas I've had, for Joel is a consummate musician/pianist. I don't mean that Joel is a very good pianist, I mean he is a rare species in the music world – possessing huge helpings of raw piano talent, musical soul, and world-class refinement in perfect combination.

I have worked closely with some truly marvelous pianists over the years, but this was an idea in which I was hoping to collaborate with a single artist over a great expanse of music. It was a true moment for providence when I think back to that phone call. I am one lucky composer for knowing Joel – and for having the friends (all pianists) for whom each of the pieces is individually dedicated below.

### I. SILHOUETTE to Maria Fernanda Nieto Pulido ..... 5

This large poem for piano found its place at the beginning of the set, as it embodies many of the qualities and contains the representative ingredients to be found throughout the entire set. The piece opens somewhat nebulously, and only when the verse first appears is it apparent that everything before was introductory. The piece is strophic, and the original verse does return, only acting to ground the listener after such indulgent departures are heard as the work unfolds. Nearing the conclusion brings about a dominant pedal of nefarious character before the tonic is driven with greater and greater persistence to the end. For the final gesture the performer is asked to play a brilliant upward scale in the right hand against a glissando in the left, to bring the music to its conclusion in a register rarely heard throughout the piece.

### II. FIGURINES to Peter Collins ..... 14

On the surface, it appears that there are two separate, unrelated musics presented in *Figurines* – hyper-virtuosic, upper-register “flourish” music and a Perpetual March. There is something attractive to my composer inclinations about this presumed disparity. However, upon further and deeper delving one can extract the glue that relates the two elements to one another. Marked as a “virtuosic improvisation,” the pianist is forbidden from the very beginning to indulge in certain human musical tendencies: “*rubato* and *agogic* are illegals.” There is a *joie de vitesse* to *Figurines* that no other work from the set embodies. This piece is for the fearless musician – the pianist who is willing to control the instrument to serve his/her whim from start to finish. There is nothing elegant about the Perpetual March which serves as the centerpiece for the movement. You must push yourself through to the other side (and your left hand had better be up to the task).

### III. LEGEND to Rob Auler ..... 22

This introspective *andantino* piece is a modal study in tight voice-leading. The opening 3-note scalar motive (G-F#-E) is an adhesive that keeps the work from unraveling. The ending presents its darker sibling (G-F-E), droning as the beginning. The very last gesture of the piece shows this dark version of the motive turned upside down and in the Dorian mode. Overall there is a foreign, somewhat exotic sentiment about this small two-page expression.

#### **IV. WHITE MOON OVER WATER** to *Avguste Antonov*..... 24

The title refers to an experience I had on the Damariscotta River in Maine in the summer of 2010. I took a one-person kayak out on the great, wide river in the middle of the night. Not a cloud in the sky, my only companions were a blinding full moon, an imposing pale-white Venus, and thousands of visible stars. I am not used to creating the kind of musical expression this piece demands, so the process was both inescapable and thrilling. Without a melodic line to anchor oneself on, I ask the pianist to use the instrument like a canvas over which many different color combinations are applied evenly throughout. The amount of restraint required to achieve this is formidable. The work's interior ("The Celestial Canopy") pulls one into a timeless realm. In this section no tempo should be felt by the listener - only a sense of eternal suspension.

#### **V. LE BRANLE** to *Ryan MacEvoy McCullough*..... 32

A branle is a 12th-century French chain dance adopted by the European aristocracy in which the dancers alternated large sideways steps to the left with an equal number of smaller steps to the right. Anglicized as "brawl," the dance usually consisted of couples intertwining arms or holding hands and progressing to the left in a circular or serpentine figure. Branles would involve running, walking, gliding, or skipping steps depending on the tempo of the music, which was composed in a 4/4 time.

Composed in 12/8 time, this fast Branle is a *moto perpetuo* wherein the direction to the performer is, "More drive, less swagger." As this weird motoric piece pushes further and further ahead there is that sense of a brawl instead of a dance. Two elements are in argument throughout: the opening material and a repeated-note section. The second occurrence of the repeated-note section sounds as if it is sweetly pleading to win over the stern insistence of the first theme. Too bad... it doesn't. The work closes with a playful but goading whistle of the original theme.

#### **VI. CLASSIC ROCK** to *Jack Gaffney*..... 36

I met Jack Gaffney when he had just turned twelve years old. We started working together on music theory lessons at the time, and these transformed quickly into songwriting lessons. Jack is a natural songwriter and pianist. His talent is undeniable. This young man (now sixteen years old) has books full of original songs with original lyrics. He and I have had some great moments together working to tighten up certain verses, craft better choruses, choose better words, shape better hooks, etc. Many, many songs and two albums later Jack is now writing songs on a whole different level. I'm filled with pride just thinking about some of the work and growth we were able to accomplish together. I've learned a lot from Jack, and the sixth piece of this set is dedicated to him as an expression of my gratitude to him and to his parents and siblings, all of whom constitute the consummate family. The opening and ending are unmistakable nods to a past composer, but aside from that it's all classic rock.

#### **VII. SHE STEALS ME** to *Kristin Kuster*..... 39

This song, subtitled *intermezzo*, owes some of its concepts to Schubert and Stravinsky. The work is cast as a plaintive Appalachian waltz in A-flat major with occasional passionate chorale-like proclamations. There is a real introverted sadness about a few of the moments in this piece, while at other times there are descriptive words and phrases on the page as "...a rocking chair on the porch," and "snowing..." Whenever I play through the piece I come terribly close to tears in all the same spots. The softie in me could not resist preserving these moments, even at the expense of obvious sentimentality.

**VIII. SOIRÉE MACABRE** to *Nikki Melville* ..... 44

A piece of haunted salon music, imagine a cadaverous Vincent Price playing this ragged ghost-waltz to an audience of zombie socialites milling about at the grand escalier, a monstrous old chandelier hanging sentinel above the fray. The harmonies are blood-soaked and often imbued with hidden malevolence, mixing extravagance with the sinister.

**IX. ORION** to *Hsing-ay Hsu* ..... 49

Giving the pianist an opportunity for pure, uninterrupted listening, the opening is a single flowing line for the right hand. As each version of the opening single line progresses the range expands, the quantity of notes increases, the tempo brightens. As in *White Moon Over Water* this piece inhabits a cosmic realm. Time signatures are missing throughout, and there are no bar lines – only notes to be brushed over with fleeting moments of tension followed obligingly by release. The more I play this piece the greater becomes its likeness to a yet-unwritten Debussy prelude.

**X. CRADLE SONG** to *Marina Lomazov*..... 52

A dark lullaby, the rocking begins and the melody enters on a third staff (acting as a vocal line over piano accompaniment). Often times the vocal line gets intertwined with the rocking and the pianist must take care to preserve the line accordingly. This little piece is a study in voicing as lines of varying importance sometimes land on top of each other.

**XI. GRAND ETUDE-FANTASY** to *Winston Choi*..... 53

Every element of this piece is ambitious. Only a masterful pianist familiar with the quick juxtapositions found in more contemporary works can hope to pull it off. I know I will never be able to perform this piece, and that fact fills me with frustration. I recently talked about this work as being a bi-tonal exploration of Bachian frenzy. The description is apt. There is a small melodic fragment of a certain shape that represents spinning out of control (i.e., two adjacent pitches expanding melodically, getting further from one another quickly), and this ingredient pervades much of the work, though there are departures into wholly different sections. The form of this piece could be characterized as a loose Rondo, though I believe *Fantasy* is a better, more sympathetic fit as the previously mentioned juxtapositions are less in keeping within the more rigid, traditional Rondo form.

**XII. AN IRISH TUNE** to *Barry Snyder* ..... 64

The composer's own arrangement of the traditional Irish Tune from County Derry, or *Londonderry Air*, the mood is hushed giving a sense of finality to the set. At the climax of the second verse the pianist might imagine a gospel choir at the height of glorious pronouncement.

*THE PIANO'S 12 SIDES* has been recorded by Joel Hastings on the Naxos label (8.559751)

# - THE PIANO'S 12 SIDES -

## I. SILHOUETTE

to Maria Fernanda Nieto Pulido

Improvisatory (veiled, flexible)

♩ = 72-80

l.h. \* (on the surface) (p) mp r.h. l.h. p clear but generous Ped. throughout ...

Walking, with elegant simplicity ♩ = 84

mp mp

Verse: A tempo ♩ = 84 singing, serene

mp expansive mp legato molto

(p) a blurred sheen

with reverence espr. introverted mp p

\* = poco ritard (throughout set)  
 → → = push tempo forward (throughout set)

## II. FIGURINES

to Peter Collins

Presto leggerissimo ♩ = 100 (♩ = 200)

*8<sup>va</sup>* a virtuosic improvisation ("rubato" and "agogic" are illegals)

*p* sempre

*6* *6* *6* *6*

*8*

*f*

*8<sup>va</sup>*

*p*

*l.h. poco stacc.*

*6* *5*

*8*

*p* *f* *mp*

*5* *ff* as fast as possible

*sost. Ped.*.....

\*Small license may be taken if needed during the short rests throughout this movement  
(in order to compensate for quick shifts from one register and hand position to the next).

Inquieto ♩ = 144

mp not heavy

The first system of the score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in bass clef and contains a complex, rhythmic accompaniment with many beamed notes and rests. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a more melodic line with some slurs and accents. The tempo is marked as 'mp not heavy'.

Tempo primo

*f* *f* *p sub.*

8<sup>va</sup>

2 1 2

6 6

2 1 2 6

The second system of the score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and features a melodic line with slurs and accents. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a rhythmic accompaniment. The tempo is marked as 'Tempo primo'. Dynamics include *f* and *p sub.*. An 8<sup>va</sup> marking is present above the upper staff. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1, 2, and 6.

8<sup>va</sup>

The third system of the score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with slurs and accents. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a rhythmic accompaniment. An 8<sup>va</sup> marking is present above the upper staff.

8<sup>va</sup>

3 2 1 5 2

1 2 1 5 2 1 3

5 2 1 2

The fourth system of the score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with slurs and accents. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a rhythmic accompaniment. An 8<sup>va</sup> marking is present above the upper staff. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1, 2, 3, 5, and 2.

8<sup>va</sup>

deep l.h. ...

3

The fifth system of the score consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with slurs and accents. The lower staff is in bass clef and contains a rhythmic accompaniment. An 8<sup>va</sup> marking is present above the upper staff. The instruction 'deep l.h. ...' is written below the lower staff. A fingering of 3 is indicated above the final note of the upper staff.

### III. LEGEND

to Rob Auler

#### Quiet Longing ♩ = 96

on the surface, never deep in the key

*p*  
*non cresc.*

*(p)*  
*cant.*

*non cresc.*  
*non arp.*  
*p*

*a bit slower*  
*mp*  
*mf*  
*p*  
*p*

*Tempo I*  
*mp*  
*pp*  
*p*



# IV. WHITE MOON OVER WATER

to Avguste Antonov

Placid, Serene, and Magical ♩ = 80

yet with very little expression

8

8va

*p* sempre  
as if brushing across the keys

Ped. lightly...

8

8va

8

8va

8

8va

# V. LE BRANLE *moto perpetuo* to Ryan MacEvoy McCullough

More drive, less swagger ♩ = ca. 128

The musical score is written for piano and bass. It consists of six systems of music. The first system begins with a treble clef and a 12/8 time signature. The piano part starts with a forte (*sf*) dynamic, while the bass part starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The second system continues the piece, with the piano part marked *mf* and the bass part marked *f*. The third system features a piano part marked *f* and a bass part marked *mp*. The fourth system includes the instruction *wet staccatos* for the piano part. The fifth system has a piano part marked *sf* and *pesante*, and a bass part marked *f*. The sixth system concludes with a piano part marked *sf* and a bass part marked *f*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

# VI. CLASSIC ROCK

to Jack Gaffney

♩ = 100

*p*

*short*

*longer*

*a tempo*

*warmly*

*p* *pacing*

*con Ped. sempre ...*  
*(never dry)*

*a tempo, like some dark tango*

*aromatic*

*pp sub.*

*f*

*mf*

*f*

*mf*

*a tempo*

*p veiled*

*f*

*mf*

*f*

*grand*

*in strict tempo*

*(a tempo)*  
*legato sempre*

*heavy steps ...*

*mf*

*mp simply*

# VII. SHE STEALS ME *intermezzo* to Kristin Kuster

**Rubato**  
*with conviction and not too slow* push and pull the phrasing  
with great expression always

The first system of the musical score consists of two staves. The left staff is in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a *mf* drone. The right staff is in treble clef. The first measure of the right staff is marked *f* and includes the instruction "a bright and singing tone, legato sempre". The second measure is marked *mf*. The system concludes with a *sost. Ped.* marking. A wavy line above the staff indicates a rubato effect.

The second system continues the piece. The left staff starts with a *f sim.* marking. The right staff begins with a *f* marking and includes the instruction "cant.". The system ends with a *p* marking. A *sim.* marking is placed below the right staff. A wavy line above the staff indicates a rubato effect.

The third system features a *mp* marking on the left staff. The right staff includes the instruction "... a rocking chair on the porch". A wavy line above the staff indicates a rubato effect.

The fourth system begins with a *mf* marking and the instruction "warmly". The right staff includes the instruction "3". The system concludes with a *p* marking.

# VIII. SOIRÉE MACABRE

to Nikki Melville

With evil intent throughout  $\text{♩} = 132$

*legato e cantabile*

The first system of the musical score is written for piano in 12/8 time. It features a treble and bass clef. The right hand begins with a series of chords and moving lines, marked with a *mf* dynamic. The left hand has a more rhythmic accompaniment, marked with *mp* and *sonoro*. Pedal markings include *sost. Ped.* and *(sost. Ped.)*.

Walking fast  $\text{♩} = 120$

with demons on the dance floor . . .

The second system continues the piece with a faster tempo. The right hand has a more active, rhythmic line, marked with *sf* and *f*. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment, marked with *sf* and *mp*. Pedal markings include *Ped.* and *Ped. sim. . .*.

The third system features a *hazy* texture in the right hand, indicated by a dashed line above the notes. The left hand continues with a rhythmic accompaniment, marked with *mf*.

The fourth system shows a change in the right hand's texture, marked with *with ease*. The left hand continues with a rhythmic accompaniment.

**a tempo**

The fifth system returns to the original tempo, marked *a tempo*. The right hand has a more active, rhythmic line, marked with *f*. The left hand continues with a rhythmic accompaniment. A triplet marking is present in the left hand.

# IX. ORION

to Hsing-ay Hsu

A flowing, even tone throughout ♩ = 108 (non cresc. sempre)

depress silently, applying sost. ped. before beginning.

*p* intimate, with *Ped.* but not too wet.

*a tempo* smooth, improvisatory transitioning between rhythms . . .

*p sim.*

*rubato*

*sost. Ped.*

*a tempo*

*p sim.*

*expanding*

*sost. Ped.*

*g<sup>vo</sup>* gently cascading

*più mosso*  
*mf* clear attacks

*l.h.*

*Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.*

# X. CRADLE SONG

to Marina Lomazov

Rocking with Calm ♩. = 56

*p*  
generous *ped.* but not too muddy

*cantabile*  
*mp*  
(*p*)

*slanted*

*a tempo (poco meno)*  
*p*  
*pp hazy*

*introverted*  
*p*  
*warm*  
*pp*  
*rubato*  
*p*

*a tempo*  
*pp*  
*sim.*

# XI. GRAND ETUDE-FANTASY

to Winston Choi

Slowly, a bright chorale - *piercing at first* ♩ = 48

*ff* *mp* *p* *f*

*Ped. with clarity always...*

*darken...*

**Prestissimo, nimble** → →

\* (7) ♩ = 166 if possible

*mp leggiero sempre*

*keep flying...*

*f*

*mp* *f*

*mp* *f*

*mp sub.*

*molto legato sempre*

*f*

\* The small numbers serve to group running eighth-notes within a the respective half-, dotted half-, or whole notes. In effect, the numbers extend the duration of these larger denominations.



# XII. AN IRISH TUNE

to Barry Snyder

Simply ♩ = 76 - 84 (a hushed choir)

lean through all irregular meters to achieve a natural flow.

with a clear melody throughout

The musical score is written for piano and consists of seven systems of music. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'Simply ♩ = 76 - 84 (a hushed choir)'. The score includes various time signatures: 4/4, 5/4, 3/4, 4/8, 5/8, and 6/8. Performance instructions include 'mp always warm...', 'l.h.', 'hazy', 'meno', 'no tie', 'p', 'p rich', 'non cresc.', 'grazioso', 'sublime, with great control', 'pp', 'p understated', and 'sim.'. A note at the bottom states '\* Do not roll wide chords unless indicated.'

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