



CALL FOR SCORES: PIANO DUETS FROM HAWAII TO HOLLAND

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ON NEW MUSIC

“Composers have to try much harder to get us to play their music. There is so much beautiful music we want to play — music we have heard of. To play music we haven’t heard of, it better be good and worthwhile.”

amateur pianist, San Francisco, May 2011

MOTIVATION

- ✧ Sight-reading
- ✧ Collaborative playing: from accompanying to playing as equals in duets, ensemble, etc.
- ✧ Discovering new works
- ✧ Contribution to life-cycle of new works: feedback, iteration, publicity, publication, recording, dissemination
- ✧ Getting to know and working with composers, pianists (amateur & professional performers)
- ✧ Travel & access to local communities

SIGHTREADING

- ✱ Definition: to be able to play music while reading the notes at first sight
- ✱ Faster to decide about the piece: whether to study for performance, what to do with it, etc.
- ✱ Sightreading ability varies greatly
- ✱ Hypothesis: true test of sightreading = play music not yet written or published or heard
- ✱ Piano Teaching Thesis, 2008, Utrecht Conservatory

HISTORY: PIANO DUETS

- ✧ History as old as piano solo & almost as rich
- ✧ Earliest piano solo composers also duet composers
- ✧ First public performance: 4-hand recital May 13, 1765
London
- ✧ First duets published: Charles Burney 1777, London
- ✧ Popularity waned in early 20th century
- ✧ Re-awakening of interest in 21st century

PIANO DUETS

- ✧ Polyphonic: huge repertoire & variety
- ✧ Sketch for larger ensemble work, e.g. Alkema
- ✧ Playing improves sightreading skills
- ✧ Playing develops musicianship (analytical thought)
- ✧ Playing improves rhythm & vice versa
- ✧ Prepares for other kinds of ensemble playing
- ✧ Social: companionship in making music
- ✧ Byproducts: cooperation, leadership, negotiation, dependability, time organization, problem-solving



MANY HANDS ON

ONE PIANO

LIFE CYCLE

- ✱ Composer creates new work
- ✱ Performer sightreads, decides, gives feedback
- ✱ Composer makes changes
- ✱ Performer studies and gives premiere of work
- ✱ Someone reviews the performance or recording
- ✱ Composer gets work published
- ✱ Other performers buy published work / recording

CALL FOR SCORES

- ✱ **Announced** in composition forums, composers association websites & newsletters & magazines, performers' websites, conservatories, universities, concert venues, competitions, mailing lists
- ✱ Opportunity for consideration
- ✱ **Incentives:** publicity, feedback, recording, premiere, performances, \$\$, future commissions, residencies
- ✱ Similar to a Request for Proposal

ANNOUNCEMENT

The composition should meet the following criteria:

- **readability & page-turnability**
- **playability**
- **repeatability:** i.e. the pianists want to play it again or share it with others. There should be an element of fun, intrigue, challenge, or something that prevents one from dismissing it and putting it away on the shelf to be forgotten.
- **length:** 2 to 5 minutes (*this can be extended to 10 minutes at normal tempo indicated*)
- **difficulty:** allow players of different levels to play together

ANNOUNCEMENT

- ✧ Deadline: 5 April 2011
- ✧ Submission format: e-mail PDF

If your piece is selected, you will get the following benefits in kind:

- interview & write-up on this blog
- publicity of your music that was selected
- feedback from the pianists

Please use the following **LEAVE A REPLY** form to express your intention to submit. You will get a reply with an e-mail address to submit your score to. Your comment will not be published.

SUBMISSIONS

- ✱ 30 composers: USA, France, Greece, China, Netherlands
- ✱ 42 works: mostly 4-hands; others: 3-hands; 5-hand, 6-hands, 8-hand
- ✱ 1 or 2 impossible to read
- ✱ 4 too hard to play
- ✱ 6 must study
- ✱ 2 sight-read/study
- ✱ 25 sight-readable



5 RIGHT HANDS

one piano



PISCHNA POLKA

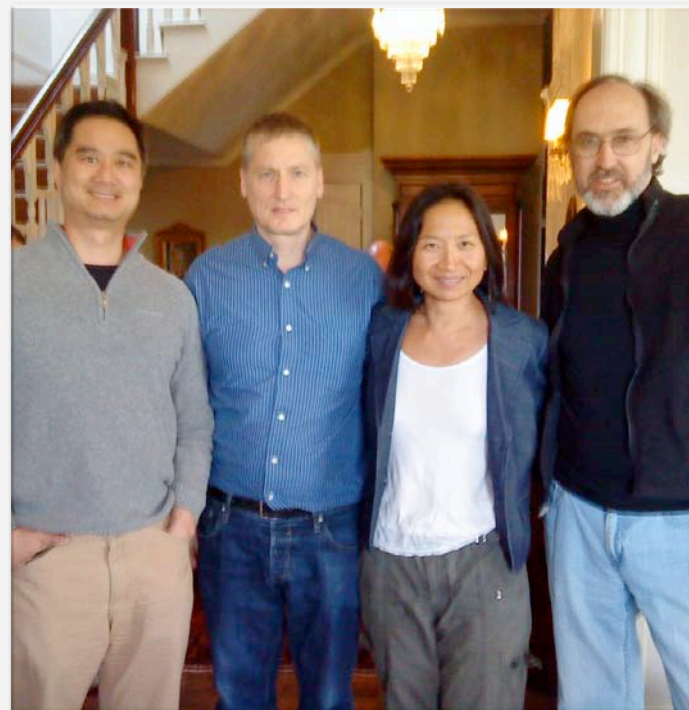
Elizabeth Lauer

PROCESS

- ✧ Idea: return to San Francisco - sightreading competition
- ✧ Call for Scores Jan 2011 - deadline early April
- ✧ First round: 3 x with pianist in Maui
- ✧ Sightreading Workshop and Soiree in SF, mid-May
- ✧ Dutch composer, New York City & then Amsterdam
- ✧ Sightreading in Utrecht & Den Haag, Netherlands
- ✧ Study/recording in Utrecht, 1 July & 4 Aug 2011
- ✧ Feedback & publicity on Concertblog

PIANO CLUB

- ✧ Amateur pianists
- ✧ Some professional performers
- ✧ Some piano teachers
- ✧ Soirees
- ✧ Solo pieces
- ✧ Romantic works





RECORDINGS

A188 Steinway Grand, NY 1909, Utrecht Netherlands

OUTCOMES

- ✱ Collaboration with new contacts:

- ✱ Chong Kee: concert producer, pianist, IT-guru
- ✱ Karyn: sightreader, music professor
- ✱ members of Piano Club, San Francisco
- ✱ composers
- ✱ Brendan, concert pianist

- ✱ Refresh old contacts

- ✱ pianists in Utrecht & Den Haag & visitor from Helsinki
- ✱ composers in Utrecht & Maui & Honolulu



FOR COMPOSERS:

- ✧ Premiere of new works
- ✧ Feedback from pianists
- ✧ Recordings: audio
- ✧ Publication
- ✧ Review of 15 duets
- ✧ Publicity: blog is easily found
- ✧ Access to pianists



SPIN-OFFS

Premiere of piano-guitar version of guitar concerto



PUBLICATION

Girl with the Hat Box for 3 hands 1 piano

ADVERSE OUTCOME

- ✱ Protest from composer of review & recording
- ✱ 50 “hate mails” from one composer posing as different people: student, son, wife, etc.
- ✱ Original blog of 26 August 2011
- ✱ Changed on 21 December 2011

LESSONS LEARNED

- ✧ Readability is key to playability
- ✧ Parallel staff vs separate pages for primo & secundo
- ✧ What is engaging, exciting, interesting to play and what is NOT
- ✧ Similar sightreading levels
- ✧ Different experience depending on which part you play and who you play with
- ✧ Page turning strategies

NEXT STEPS

- ✧ Relationships develop through collaboration, reciprocity, and working towards common goal
- ✧ Commission new kinds of work from existing composer base
- ✧ Theme-based (holidays, occasions, culture)
- ✧ Instrument-defined (piano solo, many pianos, other)
- ✧ Call for Performers (interpreters)