



FIFTY-EIGHTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE

**PERFORMANCES OF NEW MUSIC II:
ACOUSTIC SCORES**

Thomas Wells • Concert Manager

Friday, November 6, 2015

10:30 a.m.

Indiana Historical Society

Basile Theater

Indianapolis, Indiana

Just a Moment Murray Gross (Alma College)

Casey Robards, piano

Performed today by Dr. Casey Robards, *Just a Moment*, was inspired by the poignant, dramatic, and often unexpectedly daring piano music of Franz Schubert. Composed in 2012, much of the material derives from the haunting theme of Schubert's *Moment Musical* opus 94 no. 2, a melody that weaves throughout the piece in various guises; as layers overlap, a ghostly dance becomes frenzied and wild, only to depart abruptly, leaving us to contemplate the reverberant echoes of this *Moment Musical*.

Desert Rain Dominic Dousa (University of Texas-El Paso)Stephanie Meyers, violin
Stephen Nordstrom, viola

In the summer of 2012, I spent a number of evenings walking near my home, taking in the scenery of the surrounding desert landscapes. Some of those evenings featured skies painted with clouds of beautiful shapes and hues and with rain showers visible in the distance. The spirit of these scenes provided the inspiration for *Desert Rain*. Throughout the piece there is a feeling of lightness and a shimmering texture that reflect some of the colorful impressions and fleeting images of the desert monsoon.

Neutral Tones Michael F. Murray (Missouri State University)Chris Thompson, baritone
Kathy Murray, viola

The poems in this cycle address the process of aging and how our perceptions of significant events in our lives change over time. When looking back on memories of life and love from a mature perspective, those memories often take on a different color.

"The Self-Unseeing" expresses the theme of changing memories as it moves from the present into the past with a marked contrast between the two perspectives. The second movement, "Looking Across," reflects upon the passage of time and the loss of loved ones through death. The interplay between the voice and viola portrays the memories of interactions between dear friends. The movement ends with the narrator wondering why his own life continues while his closest friends are gone. The playfulness at the beginning of "The Robin" becomes resignation as the change of seasons brings upon the ultimate conclusion of the passage of time: death. ("When winter frost makes earth as steel, I search and search but find no meal.") The concluding movement, "Neutral Tones," most directly expresses the themes common to the cycle: aging, changing memories, winter, and death. The colorless imagery of the outer stanzas ("And the sun was white..." "a pond edged with grayish leaves") is reflected in the stark accompaniment of the viola, while the intense bitterness of the second and third stanzas ("The smile on your mouth was the deadest thing") is enhanced by the clipped, angry delivery of the singer.

PROGRAM

Sufi Songs Jay C. Batzner (Central Michigan University)

LaToya Lain, mezzo-soprano

Casey Robards, piano

1. Rumi

Those who don't feel this Love
pulling them like a river,
those who don't drink dawn
like a cup of spring water
or take in sunset like supper,
those who don't want to change,
let them sleep.

This Love is beyond the study of theology
that old tricker and hypocrisy.
If you want to improve your mind that way,
sleep on.

I've given up on my brain.
I've torn the cloth to shreds
and thrown it away.
If you're not completely naked,
wrap your beautiful robe of words
around you,
and sleep.

2. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen

I hold you in my heart.
I rock and sing you to sleep.
You are everywhere in everyone,
the holy baby in all of us,
that plays there.
The beautiful one,
born when we love,
the glowing child.
You are the meaning that blooms in the heart.

Song of the Himalayas Jianjun He (Jacksonville University)

Scott Watkins, piano

This work is a musical painting of the unique scenes of the Tibet Plateau: the high and steep mountains, the boundless grasslands, and the beautiful temples... It reveals the spiritual life of Tibetan people and shows their passion for music and dancing. Although the materials employed in this work are related to the Tibetan tradition, there is no direct quotation from the original folk music. Synthesizing Western compositional techniques with Tibetan musical elements this work sounds "old and new." It shows the fusion of different cultures and reflects the diversity of today's music.

Capricious Variations Daniel E. Perttu (Westminster College)

Phillip Paglialanga, clarinet

The title "Capricious Variations" is a bit of a contradiction: the variation form tends to be a more structured form, whereas the adjective "capricious" suggests a piece that is subject to sudden and unaccountable changes. This piece dances to the tension created by this contradiction.

Songs for Agatha Mark Popeney (Bunker Hill Community College)

Renae Timbie, mezzo-soprano
Chelsea Green, guitar

This piece was written as a collaboration with a fellow CMS member, Chelsea Green (one of today's performers). The song cycle is a setting of three poems by the contemporary poet Heather Green, who was also a collaborator on the project. Each is inspired in some way by Japanese literature and film - specifically, the late filmography of famed director Akira Kurosawa and the novels of Banana Yoshimoto. A quasi-narrative, the cycle explores loss and the delicate strength one finds when coping with it.

My setting of the text attempts to preserve the soft and fluid tone of the source material, encased within a somewhat minstrel-like, oratorical presentation. To create a sense of timelessness, I sought to write a guitar accompaniment that was harp-like, both in terms of its texture and its shifts in modality. In order to preserve the subtle strength of the texts, the cycle is understated, finding its emotional climaxes in the quiet intensity of the solo voice.

Headwinds Scott Routenberg (Ball State University)

No Strings Attached Winds:
Suzanne Farley, flute; Leonid Sirotkin, oboe;
Rebecca Chappell, clarinet; Melvin Chappell, bassoon;
Suzanne Rice, horn

Headwinds is a three-movement woodwind quintet hybridizing elements of jazz and classical music. Movements one and three function as contrafacts of two jazz repertoire mainstays: the twelve-bar blues and "rhythm changes." These two movements are also played with swing and feature idiomatic jazz melodies, harmonies, and rhythms.

Movement one, *A Bolt From the Blue*, opens with a modern take on the blues in F, with the quintet mimicking a small jazz ensemble. The bassoon imitates upright bass walking lines, and each instrument is featured in a written improvisation over one chorus of the form. The beginning of the horn solo playfully quotes the main theme of Strauss' *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*, which also served as Thelonious Monk's inspiration for his blues *Straight, No Chaser*. After the solos, the quintet begins a shout chorus with a quote from John Coltrane's *Giant Steps*.

The middle movement, *Vignette*, transforms melodic and rhythmic motives from the first movement into a lushly orchestrated, impressionistic and through-composed ballad.

Movement three, *Changes*, sets a new melody to the chord progression of George Gershwin's *I've Got Rhythm*, known fondly to jazz musicians as "rhythm changes." As with movement one, *Changes* pays homage to generations of jazz musicians' re-interpretations of the standard repertoire.

COMPOSER BIOGRAPHIES

Batzner, Jay C.

Jay C. Batzner (b. 1974) is on the faculty of Central Michigan University where he teaches theory, composition, and technology courses. Prior to this position he served on the faculty of the University of Central Florida and at several community colleges in the Kansas City metropolitan area. He earned his doctorate in composition at the University of Missouri–Kansas City in 2006 and holds degrees in composition and/or theory from the University of Louisville and the University of Kansas. Jay practices zazen, reads comic books, geeks out about sci-fi stuff, sews clothes, brews beer, and juggles.

Dousa, Dominic

Dominic Dousa, a native of Rochester, Minnesota, joined the faculty of the University of Texas at El Paso in 2004. At UTEP he teaches music theory, aural skills, and composition. He holds degrees from Ball State University (D.A., Music Theory & Composition, 2003), Central Michigan University (M.M., Music Composition, 2000), Iowa State University (M.S., Statistics, 1998), and Harvard University (A.B. summa cum laude, Music, 1995). He also has studied composition in Prague. His primary composition teachers include Jody Nagel, David Gillingham, Craig Weston, and Milan Slavický.

Dousa's compositions have received performances at recitals, festivals, and conferences in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Scotland, Peru, China, Korea, France, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Finland. He has works published by TRN Music and Dorn Publications. Two of Dousa's song cycles, *With a Song in My Heart* and *Six Songs on the Poetry of Langston Hughes*, are available on a CD released by Blue Griffin Recording. This CD features art songs set to texts of African American poets.

In addition to his activities as teacher and composer, Dousa has remained active as an accompanist and chamber musician. He has performed in numerous recitals at various universities and concert venues with faculty, guest artists, and students. He served as an official accompanist for the 4th Annual International Singing Competition in Trujillo, Peru in August of 2000, and performed as a pianist for the El Paso Pro Musica Chamber Music Festival in 2009 and 2014.

Gross, Murray

An award-winning composer and conductor, Murray Gross studied at the New England Conservatory, Oberlin College, Michigan State University, and the Hochschule für Musik in Munich. Chosen by Antal Dorati to serve as Assistant Conductor of the Detroit Symphony, he was also Music Director of Michigan's West Shore Symphony from 1982 through 2001, and a frequent guest conductor in Europe, South America, and throughout the United States. Dr. Gross is currently on the faculty at Alma College, where he teaches composition, theory, and film music, and conducts the Alma Symphony Orchestra.

Compositions by Murray Gross have been heard in venues around the world played by numerous professional and collegiate ensembles including the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, the New York New Music Ensemble, the Nobilis Trio, the Peninsula Festival Orchestra, and the Wisconsin Winds. His music has been broadcast over National Public Radio and received many honors including a Broadcast Music Incorporated (BMI) Award. *Urban Myth*, recorded by the North Texas Wind Symphony on the GIA Windworks series, is featured in volume 8 of "Teaching Music Through Performance in Band." Other recent cd releases include *Irrational Exuberance* for sax and piano, *The Wild, Wild West* by the h2 Sax Quartet, and a new compilation of chamber music, *Talking in my Sleep*, on the Blue Griffin label.

He, Jianjun

A native of China, Jianjun He received his BA in violin performance from Northwestern National University, MA in music theory from The Arts Academy of China, and DMA in composition from West Virginia University where he studied composition with John Beall. His compositions are enjoying growing success in Asia and the United States. They have been featured at numerous new music related festivals and conferences. CD recordings are available on ERM, VMM, Mark Masters, New Ariel, Innova, Curvepoint, and Da Di labels. Dr. He is currently Associate Professor of Composition and Theory at Jacksonville University (FL).

Murray, Michael F.

The music of composer Michael Murray has been described as "well crafted," "expertly and adroitly handled," and consisting of "pleasing washes of sounds and tone colors." Reviewers have praised his writing for voice as "excellent," "lovely," and "a gift to singers." His music has been performed and recorded across the United States and Europe, featured in venues in Norway, Sweden, Finland, Poland, the Czech Republic, over 20 different states and the District of Columbia. In addition to works for the concert hall, he has written music for film, theater productions, dance, and visual arts installations. His music has been recorded for Navona Records and is published by Ars Nova Press. He currently lives in Springfield, Missouri, where he teaches composition and music theory at Missouri State University.

Murray has won awards and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, Pi Kappa Lambda, and the Ohio Federation of Music Clubs. Incidental music and sound design Murray composed for Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* was featured in the International Prague Quadrennial Scenofest exhibition of theater design. Among his commissions are those from the Missouri Chamber Players and the music fraternities of Missouri State University. He earned a BM in composition from the Catholic University of America and his MM and DMA in composition from the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music. Prior to coming to MSU, he taught at Loyola University (New Orleans) and Angelo State University in San Angelo, Texas.

Perttu, Daniel E.

Daniel Perttu's music has been performed in Europe, Asia, South America, and throughout the United States. Performances of his music have occurred in arts festivals, new music festivals and concerts, solo recitals at the international, national, and regional levels, Society of Composers conferences, and College Music Society conferences. Perttu's music has been released on the Navona records label; one of his orchestral pieces is the title feature of the CD entitled *Light and Shadow*. In addition, his fantasy for flute and piano, *Gloamin*, was recently released on the album entitled *Lock and Key*. Critics have recognized the "modal strains [in his music] that recall the works of...Ralph Vaughan Williams and Ernest Bloch;" have characterized it as "blending mystery, action, and excitement;" and have praised it as being "fantastic" and "superb." Additionally, his recent work for orchestra and chorus, *Mountain Twilight*, was released also on Navona. Besides his CD releases, Perttu's music has been published by Editions Musica Ferrum, (Gerakas, Greece) as well as BRS Music, Inc. (Indianapolis) and Dorn Publications (Boston). He currently works as an associate professor in the Music Department at Westminster College, where he serves as the Department Chair. Previously, he taught at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, where he was the Coordinator of the Music theory Division. Perttu completed his doctorate at The Ohio State University, master's degrees at Kent State University, and his undergraduate work (magna cum laude) at Williams College, where he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

Popeney, Mark

Mark Popeney is a composer whose music spans many styles and media. His music has been heard throughout America, with performances by such groups as Ensemble Signal, the USC Thornton Symphony, the UC Alumni Chorus, and the Third Wheel Trio. His musical, *irl (In Real Life)* was premiered by Hooligan Theater Company in spring of 2011.

Mark is an Assistant Professor of Music at Bunker Hill Community College in Boston, MA. He received his Doctor of Musical Arts in Composition from the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music in 2012, where he studied with Stephen Hartke and Donald Crockett. Mark earned his Master's degree from the University of California, Los Angeles in 2007, and his Bachelor's degree in 2004 from the University of California, Berkeley. Mark is an avid singer, guitarist, and producer. [www.markpopeney.com]

Routenberg, Scott

Dr. Scott Routenberg enjoys a versatile and prolific career as an award-winning composer, arranger, jazz pianist and orchestrator.

Routenberg studied composition and arranging at the University of Miami Frost School of Music with Gary Lindsay, Ron Miller, and Raul Murciano. His jazz compositions and arrangements have been performed by the Metropole Orkest/Vince Mendoza, Howard Levy, Christian Howes, Roberta Gambarini, Ernie Watts, the University of Miami Concert Jazz Band, the New York Youth Symphony Jazz Band Classic, and many others.

Routenberg's orchestral works and Pops arrangements have been performed by many noted American symphony orchestras, including the Atlanta Symphony and the Houston Symphony. World premieres include Ukraine, the Netherlands, and China. Performance venues include Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Concertgebouw, the Lviv Philharmonic Concert Hall, and the Fox Newman Scoring Stage in Los Angeles.

Scott is the 2004 winner of the John Lennon Songwriting Contest's Maxell Song of the Year. Other awards and honors include the ASCAP Plus Award (2005-2014), 2007 ASCAP David Rose Scholarship, 2007 ASCAP Television and Film Scoring Workshop Participant, 2006 Downbeat Student Award for Best Extended Length Composition, 2006, 2003 & 2002 ASCAP Young Jazz Composer Awards, 2004 Heineken Music Initiative/ASCAP Foundation R&B Grant Program, and 2004 Henry Mancini Institute Composer Participant.

Dr. Routenberg's graduate composition degrees include a DMA (Doctor of Musical Arts) in Jazz Composition (2008) and Master of Music in Media Writing and Production (2005), both from the University of Miami. Dr. Routenberg is currently Assistant Professor of Jazz Piano at Ball State University.

PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES

Green, Chelsea

Chelsea Green is an assistant professor of music at the American University in Cairo. She holds a D.M.A. (Guitar Performance) from the University of California, Los Angeles. Green has performed throughout Egypt as a soloist and ensemble player.

Along with teaching and performing, Green arranges and transcribes French art songs for guitar and voice, published and distributed by California Guitar Archives. In 2011, she published a philosophical article entitled *Permission to Play: Obstacles and Open Spaces in Music-Making*.

In 2006, Green co-founded an electric guitar octet entitled the Los Angeles Electric 8. During her six-year membership in the octet, the Los Angeles Electric 8 recorded three full-length albums and performed in a variety of festivals including the Strathmore Guitar Festival, Sundays Live at LACMA, REDCAT's Summer Studio, World Festival of Sacred Music and MicroFest.

Lain, LaToya

Dr. LaToya Lain, a native of New Orleans, Louisiana, studied voice at the University of Cincinnati-College Conservatory of Music, Florida State University, and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She is a former Assistant Professor of Vocal Music at Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama and has also served on the faculties of New York University, Alabama A&M University, and Medgar Evers College-City University of New York.

Her awards include Encouragement Awards from the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and the Gerda Lissner Foundation Scholarship Competition in New York City. She has received both first and second places in the National Association of Teachers for Singing Vocal Competitions and earned a full scholarship to attend the International School of the Performing Arts in Pennsylvania. In addition to being an effective voice teacher, one of her ministries is to continue to promote and preserve the art of the Negro Spiritual, and to that end, she has performed and recorded with The Moses Hogan Chorale and is currently a touring member of The American Spiritual Ensemble.

Meyers, Stephanie

Dr. Stephanie Meyers is Professor of Violin, Viola, and Chamber Music at the UTEP Department of Music, where she has been on faculty since 2001 and currently serves as Division Coordinator for the String Area. Dr. Meyers holds a B.M. degree cum laude in violin performance from the University of Houston, where she studied with Fredell Lack. After attending the Manhattan School of Music for graduate studies with Sylvia Rosenberg, Dr. Meyers moved to Boston and earned both her M.M. and D.M.A. degrees in violin performance from New England Conservatory, where she studied with James Buswell. In addition to teaching at UTEP and various summer festivals, she has maintained an active performing career as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral musician.

Murray, Kathy

Violist Kathy Murray has a varied performance background in chamber music, orchestra, and opera. She is a member of the Springfield (MO) Symphony and the Fort Smith (AR) Symphony Orchestras, and has served as principal viola in the Chamber Orchestra of the Ozarks. She regularly performs string quartet and other chamber literature with the Stanton Strings, where she also holds the position of Staff Arranger. Kathy graduated from the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music and Loyola University (New Orleans), and currently teaches music theory and ear training courses at Missouri State University.

No Strings Attached Winds

No Strings Attached Winds is a newly formed woodwind quintet comprised of professional Indianapolis studio musicians and educators.

Suzanne Farley is an active freelance musician and studio session player in the Indianapolis area. She is a member of the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra and substitute flutist for the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. She earned her BS and MM in flute performance from Ball State University.

Leonid Sirotkin is Assistant Professor of Oboe at DePauw University and oboist with the Fort Wayne Philharmonic. Leonid received his BM and MM from the St. Petersburg State Conservatory (Russia) and served for almost a decade as Principal English Horn with the Kirov Opera and Symphony Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theater.

Rebecca Chappell is Director of Music Business Studies at Anderson University and Professor of Music in clarinet and saxophone. She received a BA from Anderson University, MM from Oklahoma City University, and DA from Ball State University. She is an active session musician and has performed with

many regional orchestras.

Melvin Chappell currently teaches bassoon at Anderson University and works as a freelance musician for several area orchestras. Melvin performed with the Houston Grand Opera for more than a decade. Melvin earned a BA from Anderson University and did post-graduate work at Ball State University.

Suzanne Rice is the horn instructor at both Anderson University and Taylor University. She is an active freelance musician and performs with several regional orchestras. Suzanne holds degrees from Eastman School of Music, the University of Michigan, and Ball State University.

Nordstrom, Stephen

Dr. Stephen Nordstrom joined the faculty of the UTEP Department of Music in 2014. Prior to coming to El Paso, he taught violin and viola at Indiana University East and Earlham College. Dr. Nordstrom completed his D.M.A degree in violin and orchestral conducting at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM). He earned both an Artist Diploma and Master of Music degrees from CCM and a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of North Texas. Dr. Nordstrom's primary violin teachers include Won-Bin Yim and Philip Lewis, and he has studied orchestral conducting with Ai Khai Pung, Mark Gibson, and Donald Portnoy. He has won a number of competitions as a soloist and has performed internationally as a chamber musician.

Paglialonga, Phillip O.

Phillip O. Paglialonga currently serves on the faculty of Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia. He did his undergraduate study at DePaul University as a student of Chicago Symphony Principal Clarinetist Larry Combs and earned a masters and a doctorate from the University of Michigan as a student of Fred Ormand and Daniel Gilbert. He has held positions with the Sarasota Opera Orchestra, Haddonfield Symphony and Walt Disney World Orchestra. He has appeared with numerous orchestras including the Sarasota Orchestra, Florida Orchestra, Orlando Philharmonic, Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Kalamazoo Symphony, Windsor Symphony in Ontario, and Charleston Symphony. He has also performed at several summer festivals including the National Repertory Orchestra, the Music Academy of the West, and Lake George Opera. He is a founding member of the PEN Trio (www.PENtrio.com), which regularly tours throughout the United States and is represented by Price Rubin & Partners. In the summer months Dr. Paglialonga is on the faculty at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp in Michigan where he performs with the Festival Orchestra. Dr. Paglialonga has authored several articles for the Clarinet, Keynotes Magazine, School Band & Orchestra and the Journal of the National Association of College Wind and Percussion Instructors which are available on his website (www.thefirstgissilent.com). Dr. Paglialonga recently completed work on a new book, *Squeak Big: Practical Fundamentals for the Successful Clarinetist* that will be published by Imagine Music Publishing and available worldwide in 2015. Dr. Paglialonga is a Gonzalez artist and performs exclusively on Gonzalez GD reeds.

Robards, Casey

Pianist and vocal coach, Dr. Casey Robards is known for her versatility and sensitive musicality. Casey has given recitals with singers and instrumentalists throughout the United States, as well as Europe, Central and South America and Asia. She is a founding member of the KO Trio with flutist, Donna Shin and cellist, Ji Yon Shim and concertises regularly with her husband in the Patterson Piano Duo. Casey's repertoire includes art song, opera, musical theatre, gospel and popular vocal music, standard solo instrumental repertoire, and vocal or piano arrangements of the Negro spiritual.

Dr. Robards is currently a Lecturer in Collaborative Piano at Central Michigan University and a Faculty Artist and Director of Collaborative Piano at the Bay View Music Festival. Previous appointments include positions at Indiana University, Oberlin Conservatory, and Indianapolis Opera. She has degrees in Piano Performance, Piano Pedagogy and Vocal Coaching and Accompanying from the University of Illinois. [www.caseyrobarbs.com]

PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES

Thompson, Chris

Baritone Chris Thompson has performed leading lyric baritone roles across the United States and England ranging from Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* to the title role in *Elijah* to Carl Magnus in *A Little Night Music*. A strong advocate of new music, Chris made his Carnegie Hall debut in January 2012 singing *Posh*, a song cycle by composer Mohammed Fairouz, released on Naxos (Native Informant) where he was described as a “remarkable baritone” (Opera News) who delivers a “supremely nuanced performance” (Gramophone). Chris made his Off-Broadway debut in *Fermat’s Last Tango* (Original Cast Recordings) and is a featured soloist on *Impetuosities* (Albany Records) by New York composer Joshua Rosenblum and *Percipience* (Navona Records) by composer Michael Murray. A graduate of the University of Kansas, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (London), Loyola University (New Orleans), and Kansas State University, Chris presently serves as Coordinator of Vocal Studies at Missouri State University.

Timbie, Renae

Renae Timbie, mezzo-soprano, serves full-time as director of music at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Muncie, Indiana. Timbie earned her B.A. in Music Performance (Voice) from Taylor University and a M.M. in Choral Conducting from Ball State University. She is a candidate for the Doctorate of Arts degree in Choral Conducting at Ball State University.

Timbie was previously a visiting instructor of music at the American University in Cairo where she conducted two choirs, taught several core music courses, and gave private voice lessons. She also taught music appreciation courses at Taylor University and Ball State University. In the academic setting as well as in her community, Timbie continues to perform as a soloist.

Scott Watkins

Scott Watkins is a graduate of The University of Cincinnati’s College-Conservatory of Music with a degree in piano performance where he held the Van Cliburn Scholarship. He earned the Master of Music degree from The University of South Carolina and holds the Doctor of Music degree in piano performance from The Florida State University where he studied with the late Edward Kilenyi. He won the prestigious Artistic Ambassador Award from The U. S. Department of State in 1985, and the Patricia D’Angelus Award at the Memphis Beethoven International Piano Competition in 1999. Since those early days his career has taken him to many of the world’s concert stages, and he has enjoyed many collaborations with some of the finest orchestras and soloists. Watkins has been a champion of new music throughout his distinguished 30-year career, including world premiere performances of works by Elie Siegmeister, Ned Rorem, and He Jianjun, whose Piano Sonata was given its world premiere by Watkins in Wyoming in 2009 and repeated at Carnegie Hall the following year. In 2013 Watkins gave the first international performance of Howard Hanson’s recently discovered Piano Sonata in China.

His latest recording, *American Piano Sonatas*, has garnered high praise from critics. The Dallas Morning News said that “Watkins plays authoritatively and expressively,” and *Fanfare Magazine* said that “Watkins plays splendidly bringing a fine tonal balance and elegance” to the three sonatas by Howard Hanson, Carlisle Floyd, and William Schirmer.

Watkins is currently Associate Professor of Piano at Jacksonville University.



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