
James
MATHESON

Alone, in Waters
Shimmering and Dark

for Piano

Program Note

In the middle of a lake in Pine Plains, NY sits a solitary house on an island. The water ripples around it, the surroundings are beautiful, geese and a pair of swans fly and swim, toads croak at night. It is evocative and beautiful in its context. It occurred to me at one point, though, that this was all from the point of view from an observer on the mainland. From the island itself, the experience would likely be very different – solitary, peaceful, exuberant when the natural elements are roused, but perhaps with an underlying loneliness of perspective as well.

The piece consists of three short movements. The third of these was originally written earlier in 2016 (under a different title) for a memorial concert for my late teacher, mentor, and friend, Steven Stucky. As I was working on it I came to feel that it was also meant for something larger. And with an opportunity to write for Nadia Shpachenko approaching, it made perfect sense that the larger work that I envisioned would be the piece I wrote for her.

Everyone knew Steve's brilliant side, his witty side, his generous side, his gregarious side. Not everyone knew of the more private Steve, whom I think felt a bit like a lone traveler. That perspective offered a perfect meshing of my intentions for this piece: to capture that feeling of isolation, but also of the unexpected joy that can sometimes highlight the fine line between loneliness and its happier sibling, solitude.

— James Matheson

for Nadia
Alone, in Waters Shimmering and Dark

Duration: c. 8'

for Piano

I. Island

James Matheson

2016

Cold, very slow; $\text{♩} = 42$

10

20

29

fff *pp*

ff *p*

pp *ppp*

(ppp) *fff sub.* *pp*

II. Capillary Waves

Quick, relentless ♩ = 126

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time, marked "Quick, relentless" with a tempo of ♩ = 126. The piece is in the key of D major. The score is divided into four systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs).

- System 1:** Measures 1-4. The right hand features a rapid, repetitive eighth-note pattern starting on G4, with an *8va* marking above the first measure. The left hand plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The dynamic is *f driving*.
- System 2:** Measures 5-8. The right hand continues the eighth-note pattern, with a *3* above the first measure and an *8va* marking. The left hand has rests in measures 5 and 6, then resumes. The dynamic is *ff*. A section marker **(B)** is placed above measure 7. An *8vb* marking is below measure 8.
- System 3:** Measures 9-12. The right hand continues the eighth-note pattern, with a *5* above the first measure. The left hand continues the accompaniment. An *8vb* marking is below measure 12.
- System 4:** Measures 13-16. The right hand continues the eighth-note pattern, with a *6* above the first measure. The left hand continues the accompaniment. An *8vb* marking is below measure 16.

for Steve
III. To Sky

Kaleidoscopic, ♩ = 116

8va

ppp very quietly and mysteriously, *rubato*

Ped.
light pedal, blurred, but transparent

6 (8)

loco

pp *ppp* *pp*

Ped.

10

p *ppp*

14

(C#) (F)

meno p *ppp* *mp* *ppp* *p* quiet, but radiant

Poco meno, expansive ♩ = 56
poco rubato

Ped.