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.

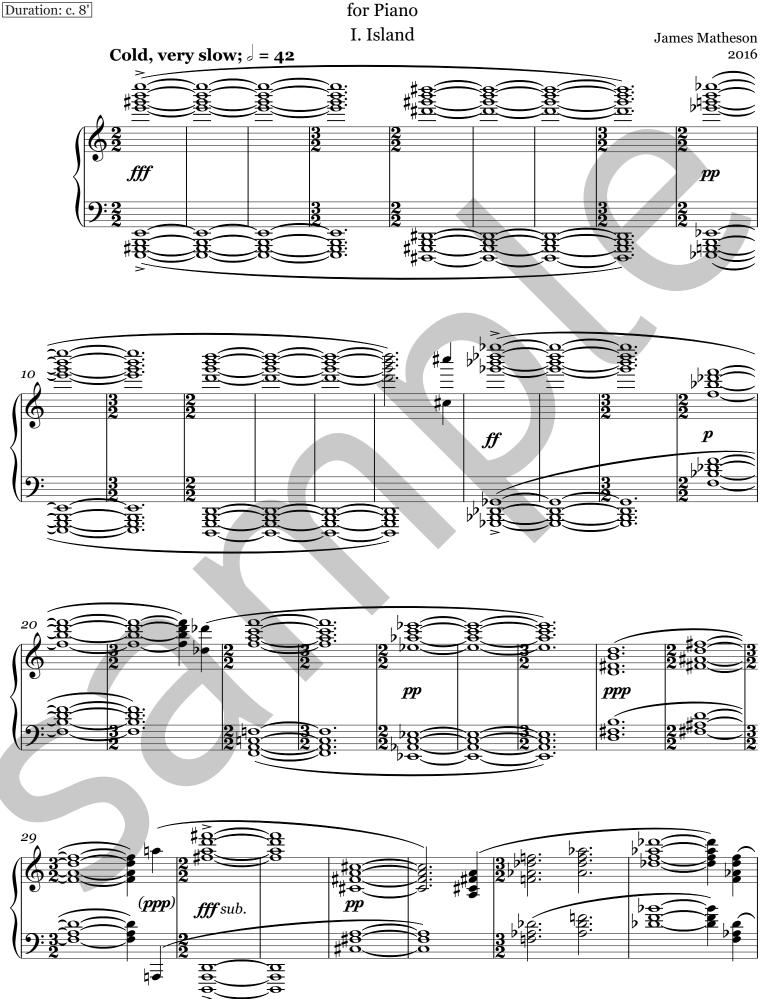
The piece consists of three short movements. The third of these was originally written earlier in 2016 (under a different title) for a memorial concert for my late teacher, mentor, and friend, Steven Stucky. As I was working on it I came to feel that it was also meant for something larger. And with an 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.

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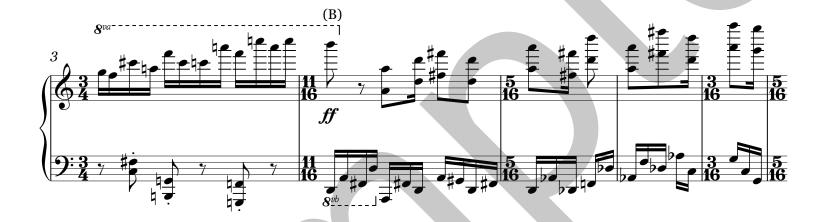
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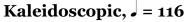
II. Capillary Waves

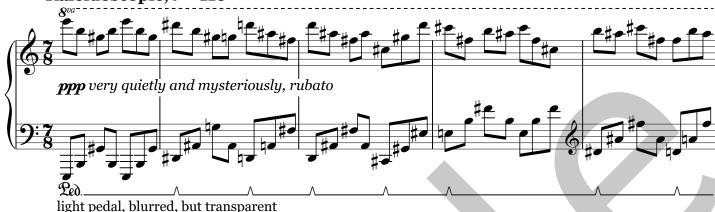












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