

Composers' Notes on their Act One Compositions...

Gary Adler *For Harvey... (A Theatrical Fantasy for Flute and Piano)*

This piece is inspired by the compositional and pianistic artistry of one of my mentors, Harvey Schmidt. There are thematic nods toward the many musicals he wrote with Tom Jones, including *The Fantasticks*, *110 In The Shade*, *Celebration*, and *Mirette*. Harvey had a musical style that was specific just to him, which gave him a unique voice in the American Musical Theatre. I wish to thank Janet Axelrod for lighting my creative fire, and enabling me to compose this tribute to my friend.

Mary-Mitchell Campbell *feuille dans un ruisseau*

This piece was inspired by a recent trip to Paris, and walking through some gardens where the leaves were falling into a nearby stream. I have always loved French impressionism, so there are nods to that world while using more modern chord progressions. I knew Janet would be able to breathe life into this style and play it with stunning musicality. I was thinking of my good friend Gavin Creel when she wrote this piece, and dedicates it to him and the brilliant Janet Axelrod.

David Chase *Jump Scher(z)*

Jump Scher(z), like its name implies, is partly a scherzo and partly a jump (as in “Jump, Jive, and Wail”, not as in Van Halen), although purists may claim that it’s simply a fright. Either way, the point is to playfully poke fun at the conventions of recital decorum while making good music. Please enjoy, and don’t be scared. You never know what’s lurking around the next measure. A quite relevant fact here is that David played tenor sax in the Woodson High School jazz band and sat next to Janet Axelrod. David wisely gave up the sax. Janet wisely did not give up the flute.

Joseph Church *Oasis*

“*Oasis*,” a freeform piece for flute and piano in three movements, was commissioned by flutist Janet Axelrod and composed in late 2020 and early 2021. It was inspired by the sounds, sights, and activity of a (pandemic-imposed) retreat in the woods of Eastern Long Island. Like many environments during the pandemic, the location seemed to regress to a more natural state due to a prolonged pause in human activity. Easily audible in the piece will be bird calls, woven into a repetitive and swirling counterpoint, set against a backdrop of rustling trees, a waterfall, and wind chimes. Among the other denizens of the oasis the listener will meet are frogs, insects, butterflies, rabbits, deer, and fish... and a few ghosts.

Roughly following the progression of a day, the tone of the music shifts as life—and death, and rebirth—in the oasis continue. The first movement is an awakening, an improvisatory stirring, trading, and clashing of motives and rhythms that will recur throughout the piece in various guises. The second movement, a scherzo, is a celebration of musical cooperations and collisions, in the air and in the water, and in the music’s stubbornly ambiguous tonality. The final movement begins with a flute

cadenza, a call to a lost soul. Gradually the piano joins, and a doleful processional begins. It slowly rises to a climax, then dissolves into lonely near-silence. The lively sounds of the first movement briefly return, but soon dissipate to a weary end. Throughout the work, the duality of existence is always apparent in a sense of joy and playfulness tinged with mystery and uncertainty. It was commissioned by flutist Janet Axelrod and composed in late 2020 and early 2021.

Joshua Rosenblum *Touch and Go*

I originally called this “Janet’s Piece,” but then felt I needed a more specific title since all the works in this collection were going to be Janet’s pieces. When I was writing it, I had the Claude Bolling model in mind, with alternating sections of quasi-classical and swing. Or, more generally speaking, lyrical and sustained contrasting with fast and flashy. I thought of the phrase “touch and go,” which implies a precarious state (something we all experienced during the pandemic), but which also has the double meaning of something that can “touch” you because it’s tender and melodic, and then “go”—shoot out of the gate with drive and propulsion. In any case, it’s still definitely Janet’s Piece, because she plays it so gorgeously.

Georgia Stitt *Duet for Flute and Piano #1*

I am so thrilled that Janet Axelrod invited me to write a piece for flute and piano. I wanted to explore the more playful nature of the flute and balance it with everything that can be stirringly emotional about the instrument. My technical brain played with the number five (quintuplets, 5/4 bars, perfect and augmented fifths), but really I just wanted to write something beautiful that Janet and I would enjoy playing together!