



Salon Concerts at Klavierhaus

Jed Distler, artistic director

presents

Reflection and Celebration



James Adler

pianist and composer

Sunday, April 28th, 2024

2:00 pm

790 11th Avenue

New York, NY 10019

Salon Concerts at Klavierhaus
presents

James Adler
Pianist and Composer

Reflection and Celebration

*Dedicated to my good friend and Engineer-Maestro
Joseph Patrych
Martin Patrych Memorial Studios
August 6, 1955 — December 18, 2023
Of blessed memory*

Program

Henco Espag **Mistieke Feetjies** ("Mystical Fairies") (2022)
Dedicated to James Adler

Paul Turok **Little Suite for Piano, Op. 9** (1976)
Prelude
Arabesque
Toccata

In celebration of a joyous friendship and collaboration

Ludwig van Beethoven **Sonata No. 21 in C Major, Op. 53** (1804)
("Waldstein")
I. Allegro con Brio
II. Introduzione, Adagio molto
III. Rondo, Allegretto moderato – Prestissimo

*Dedicated to Seymour Lipkin, Rudolf Serkin,
and Eleanor Sokoloff, my mentors at the Curtis Institute of Music*

Robert Schumann

Kinderszenen, Op. 15 (1838)

(Scenes from Childhood)

Von fremden Ländern und Menschen – Kuriose Geschichte – Hasche-Mann –
Bittendes Kind – Glückes genug – Wichtige Begebenheit – Träumerei –
Am Kamin - Ritter vom Steckenpferd – Fast zu ernst – Fürchtenmachen –
Kind im Einschlummern – Der Dichter spricht

Of Foreign Lands and Peoples – A Curious Story – Blind Man's Bluff –
Pleading Child - Happy Enough – An Important Event – Dreaming –
At the Fireside – Knight of the Hobbyhorse – Almost Too Serious – Frightening –
Child Falling Asleep – The Poet Speaks

James Adler

A Curtis Reflection (2022–2023)

I. 222 (222 W. Rittenhouse Square)

II. Parkway House (2201 Pennsylvania Avenue)

III. 1726 (1726 Locust Street)

Commissioned by and dedicated to

The Curtis Institute of Music

In Celebration of their Centenary in 2024

#

James Adler, pianist and composer

Elegy Artist Management • www.elegyartistmanagement.com

James Adler is a Yamaha Artist

About the Artist



Photo: Frank Gimpayya

James Adler is a pianist who “can create whatever type of music he wants at the keyboard” (*Chicago Sun-Times*) and a composer who writes “with uncommon imagination” (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*). The Curtis Institute of Music commissioned a new work from Mr. Adler as part of their Centenary Commissioning Initiative *100x100*. He presented the world premiere of *A Curtis Reflection* for piano solo in recital at the Yamaha Artist Services Studio NY in November; this will be broadcast at Curtis during their Centenary Celebrations in 2024. In April, he appears in recital on the “Arts on Bergen” series in Jersey City, and his *Suite Moderne for Strings* is featured April 4th at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall.

In September 2023, the Global Music Awards selected Mr. Adler as a Silver Medal Winner – Outstanding Achievement in the Composer category for his album *That Star in the Picture*. The album also landed on the 2023 Top 20 Classical (Vocal) recording list of *textura*. Luciano Feliciani (*Kathodik*) calls this “a disc of great value, to be savored slowly,” while Judith Clurman (Conductor, Essential Voices USA) notes that “James Adler writes beautiful melodies.” This “exquisite” (David DeBoor Canfield, *Fanfare*), “lovely collection of lighter songs” (Henry Fogel, *Fanfare*) features performances by cabaret artists Shana Farr and Michael Buchanan; Broadway performer Kennedy Kanagawa; Perry Sook and Elizaveta Ulahovich; and Metropolitan Opera mezzo-soprano Victoria Livengood in a new chamber version of Mr. Adler’s “Pie Jesu” from *Memento mori: An AIDS Requiem*.

He is honored to serve on the Sound Espresso Advisory Board. Sound Espresso - Virtual Classical/Jazz music is known for the competitions and events it hosts. In 2023-2024, performers will compete for an in-person concerto appearance at Carnegie Hall, as well as with other orchestras throughout the world. The *James Adler Audience Favorite Award* is presented at Carnegie Hall during the Laureate Gala, and Mr. Adler, a known interpreter of Rachmaninoff’s music, serves as a judge for a special competition celebrating the life and music of Sergei Rachmaninoff.

Mr. Adler made his orchestral performing debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and has appeared in recital on the Orchestra’s Allied Arts Piano Series, and the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concerts Series. His appearances have brought him from Chicago’s Grant Park, to London’s Royal Albert Hall (broadcast by the BBC), to Thessaloniki, Greece, to New York’s Alice Tully Hall, Symphony Space, and the Paramount Theatre at Madison Square Garden.

His extensive list of compositions is headed by *Memento mori: An AIDS Requiem*. Performed worldwide, recorded by AmorArtis Chorale and Orchestra, and

About the Artist

published by Alfred Music, *Memento mori* features a “range of expression [that] is expansive” and is “a unique, well-crafted, emotionally rich piece” (*American Record Guide*). Other compositions include *Reflections upon a September morn* (poetry by Walt Whitman); *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* with poetry by William Blake; *A Winter Triptych* (recorded by the choir of Judson Memorial Church, Henco Espag, music director); *Monday’s Child*, performed at The Cathedral of Saint John the Divine and at The Metropolitan Museum of Art; *Daughters of Music* (lyric by Debra Rue), commissioned by Sigma Alpha Iota International Music Fraternity Fort Worth Alumnae Chapter and performed at the SAI National Convention in 2018; *Carols of Splendour*, premiered at Carnegie Hall (“A cheerful, splashy tour de force, skillfully constructed and full of clever ideas,” *The Choral Journal*); *It’s Gotta Be America*, commissioned for the Centennial Celebration of the Statue of Liberty; *FANFARE XL* for symphonic band, written for the 40th anniversary of The Lesbian & Gay Big Apple Corps; *Elegy and Impromptu* for Oboe and Piano (commissioned and premiered by Ian Shafer); and *Canticle For Peace*, written for the opening of the 43rd session of the United Nations General Assembly (published by Colla Voce Music). Mr. Adler is also the composer of *Concerto in G for Piano and Orchestra* (published by Alfred Music and distributed by Theodore Presser), the children’s “pOpera” *Herbie and Carnie: A Dinosaga*, the *Classic Rag-time Suite* for orchestra, numerous solo, chamber, and choral works, and the award-winning film score for *The Hat Act*.

As performer and composer, Mr. Adler can be heard on recordings from Albany Records, Capstone, Navona, and Ravello Records. He is a member of the Arts Department at Saint Peter’s University, a National Arts Associate in the Sigma Alpha Iota International Music Fraternity and was selected in 2018 for membership in the SAI Composer’s Bureau. James Adler is a recipient of the 2017 Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award. Mr. Adler is a Yamaha Artist.

www.adleroaksmusic.com

About the Composers



Henco Espag is an active conductor, composer, arranger, pianist, music director and pedagogue, as well as a native South African and an avid lover of all things Lego.

Henco served as faculty, vocal coach, and music director for the Musical Theatre Department at Westminster College of the Arts and is currently on faculty at Saint Peter's University. He served as music director for SurfFlight Theatre, a regional theatre on Long Beach Island, NJ, and is currently music director/conductor for The Queer Big Apple Corps Symphonic Band, a 120-member LGBTQIA+ community concert band.

Henco is also the music/choir director for Judson Memorial Church at Washington Square Park, where he led the choir in a recording of James Adler's *A Winter Triptych* for Albany Records.

The band premiered a co-arrangement by Henco of *Lift Every Voice and Sing* with soloists from the Tony-Award-winning Broadway revival of *Porgy and Bess* in a virtual performance in 2021. Henco is also spearheading an annual BIPOC Composition Competition to bring new voices into the concert band milieu. The QBAC has premiered two winners' works so far, and looks forward to continuing to showcase more under-represented voices.

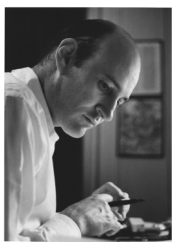
Henco also works as music director in collaboration with ASL artists, and was a part of two Broadway Signs productions at the Triad Theatre with Broadway's, Russell Harvard. Henco was the composer and sound designer for an ASL, LGBTQIA+ musical short film, *Disconnected*, through Hearts Productions, released in 2021.

Henco is the composer for the musical *Pompeii Rising* and in August 2022 co-produced and music directed a concert version at Judson Memorial Church with a sold-out house.

Henco is honoured to have had his piano composition *Herinneringe* premiered and recorded by James Adler, and now even more so to have another work *Mistieke Feetjies* premiered by Mr. Adler as well.

B.Mus – Berklee College of Music & MFA – Tisch School of the Arts @ NYU

About the Composers



Paul Turok studied composition with Karol Rathaus at Queens College, Roger Sessions at the University of California (Berkeley) and also at Princeton, and with Wagenaar and Mennin at Juilliard. After serving in the Korean War in the early 1950s, he taught at CUNY and was visiting Professor of Composition at Williams College.

Paul Turok's orchestral works have been performed worldwide, including premieres by The Cleveland and Philadelphia Orchestras. "*Threnody*" was recorded on Modern Masters by the City of London Sinfonia (David Amos). "*Aspects of Lincoln and Liberty*" (2007), with the Nashville Symphony conducted by Leonard Slatkin, celebrated the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth. A regular contributor of classical music feature articles in the Sunday *New York Times* Arts Section, he was also a frequent guest critic on WQXR's nationally-syndicated program *First Hearing*. He wrote for *The Herald Tribune*, *Ovation*, *Music Journal*, and *Fanfare* before founding *Turok's Choice: the Insider's Review of New Classical Recordings*, which he published from 1990–2011.

About the Program

Mistieke Feetjies • Henco Espag

Dedicated to James Adler

Mistieke Feetjies/Mystical Fairies takes you on a journey to a magical aura where everything is light, serene, and without pressure. It is an escape from the crazy, intense, and busy lives we live.

The main body of the work has a natural ebb and flow that symbolises deep breaths to induce a sense of calm and groundedness.

The slower first section is built on dominant 9th and major 7th chords to create a feeling of forward motion and a world of possibilities.

The middle fast section is playful and whimsical and sits predominantly in a higher register to imitate fairies playing, but also provide some humour.

We then end with a recapitulation of the slower first section, but this time in a more grandiose manner. This shows that there is a light at the end of the tunnel and that life is a big adventure.

— *Henco Espag*

About the Program

Paul Turok • Little Suite for Piano, Op. 9

Little Suite is in three movements: Prelude, a brisk, almost-perpetual motion, based on a driving eighth-note figure; Arabesque, a trill-study; and Toccata, a crisp, fast-moving showpiece. — *Paul Turok*

Robert Schumann • Kinderszenen

Schumann wrote 30 movements for **Kinderszenen** but chose 13 for the final version. He told his wife Clara that the “thirty small, droll things,” most of them less than a page in length, were inspired by her comment that he sometimes seemed “like a child.” He described them in 1840 as “more cheerful, gentler, more melodic” than his earlier works.

Movement No. 7 of the work, *Träumerei*, is one of Schumann's best known pieces and was written as a tribute to his four-year-old daughter Marie. It is the opening and closing musical theme of the 1947 Hollywood film *Song of Love*, and *Träumerei* is the title of a 1944 German biographical film on Schumann. In Russia, a hummed choral a cappella version became known as mourning music, being played annually during the Minute of Silence on Victory Day.

— *Wikipedia*

Ludwig van Beethoven • Piano Sonata No. 21 in C major, Op. 53 (1804)

Known as the “Waldstein,” Piano Sonata No. 21 is one of Beethoven's three most notable sonatas of his middle period. Completed in summer 1804 and surpassing Beethoven's previous piano sonatas in its scope, the “Waldstein” is a key early work of Beethoven's “Heroic” decade (1803–1812) and set a standard for piano composition in the grand manner.

The sonata's name derives from Beethoven's dedication to his close friend and patron, Count Ferdinand Ernst Gabriel von Waldstein of Vienna. Like the Archduke Trio (one of many pieces dedicated to Archduke Rudolph), it is named for Waldstein even though other works are dedicated to him. It is also known as “L'Aurora” (The Dawn) in Italian, for the sonority of the opening chords of the third movement, thought to conjure an image of daybreak.

It is considered one of Beethoven's greatest and most technically challenging piano sonatas. The first section of the rondo requires a simultaneous pedal trill, high melody, and rapid left-hand runs; the coda features glissando octaves written in dialog between the two hands.

— *Wikipedia*

About the Program

A Curtis Reflection for Piano Solo • James Adler

Commissioned by, and Dedicated to,

The Curtis Institute of Music In Celebration of their Centenary in 2024

When I was invited to participate in the 100 × 100 Curtis commissioning initiative by Dean Nick DiBerardino, I said, “Sign me up!” Curtis has given me so much; I wanted to give something back. Something musical. The initial request was to compose a five-minute work. But Nick pointed out that Roberto (i.e., Roberto Diaz, the president and CEO of the Curtis Institute) said that, since I graduated with both a Bachelor’s degree in Piano Performance and a Master of Composition degree, I could write something much longer. The resulting work is **A Curtis Reflection** (2022–23) for piano solo, approximately 12 minutes long, in three movements. Thank you, Nick, Roberto, and your wonderful and supportive team!

Movement I. “222.” Why “222” as the title? The address of my first apartment in Philadelphia was 222 W. Rittenhouse Square, Fall 1969. Several Curtis faculty members also lived there, so I was well looked after. The movement starts in a slow Andante tempo in F Major, with the occasional intrusion of three loud low G’s. Those three notes are the address (second note of the diatonic scale in F Major). The movement moves through sweet, soft figures into angrier, more accented figures. During my first four years at Curtis, my family and I dealt with the death of my sister Sherry in 1972. I gave Sherry her own musical motif in this movement and throughout the suite. The final page of this movement uses bitonality: G Major, happier chords in the right hand, with intruding dissonant F sharps in the left hand as punctuation. With three left-hand *sec* staccato low Gs, I incorporate special pedal techniques (*shhh*, I don’t want to give away secrets LOL) to lead to the movement’s conclusion.

Movement II. “Parkway House.” The address was 2201 Pennsylvania Avenue, where my partner John and I moved. The movement is marked Slow, Molto Legato – Nostalgic and is set in the lush key – for some, the key of “love” – of D flat Major. It starts in 5/4 tempo, very lyrical, with some contrasting time signatures. I loved living in this building. I hope the love shines through, especially with thick chordal structures which end the piece not on a tonic or “solid” ending, but on the dominant. The low A flat continues to ring ... with a decrescendo *al niente* – to nothingness. John moved back to Chicago. I felt that void.

Movement III. “1726.” The address is 1726 Locust Street, home of the Curtis Institute of Music. I set the address in the diatonic scale on C, with the notes: C-B-D-A. (The B is natural, not flat.) The movement starts Slow, marcato. It moves, 11 measures later, into Precipitato — “Rushed; impetuously.” A joyous, happy spirit takes over with sharp, rhythmic, and jazzy accents — in both hands. Bitonality is

About the Program

used to create divergent moods. Themes from the first movement return, especially my sister Sherry's theme, her motif. My hope is that you will feel the music and these special moments. I don't want to point out in which measures this happens. But the marking in the music is *A* little held back. Then those three low G's from the first movement recur. And more bitonality is the result. Sometimes, trying to rush back to Curtis for classes, I might feel like "sliding" more quickly. That's in the music in the concluding *Brillante* section. Those "slides" are in the music, marked *quasi gliss*. The movement gets faster and faster – the "Rushed" *Precipitato* designation hopefully living up to its name. We move from quarter note = 120 to 130, into a concluding *Prestissimo*! The result is a joyous, happy, *brilliante* ending in C Major. Enjoy!

— *James Adler*

Mr. Adler wishes to thank:

Jed Distler, Artistic Director; James Wu, A/V Engineer; and the staff at Klavierhaus
Alanna Maharajh Stone, Marketing & Publicity

Frank Gimpaya, photographer

Henco Espag, composer

Jean Lyman Goetz

Scott Oaks

Susan Turok