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# Music for Piano and Electronics: Jeri-Mae G. Astolfi

Jeri-Mae G. Astolfi, Piano

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associations, she serves on the governing board of both the Wisconsin Music Teachers Association and PianoArts (a North American piano competition, festival, and fellowship organization). Her advanced studies in piano performance were with pianists Helmut Brauss (University of Alberta), Tom Plaunt (McGill University), and Lydia Artymiw (University of Minnesota), with whom she completed doctoral studies. Astolfi currently serves on the music faculty of the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh.

**Illinois State University**  
**College of Fine Arts**  
**School of Music**

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**Here (and there): Music for Piano and Electronics**

**Jeri-Mae G. Astolfi, *Piano***

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**Kemp Recital Hall**  
**January 24, 2013**  
**Thursday Evening**  
**8:00 p.m.**

**This is the eighty-first program of the 2012-2013 season.**

## Program

Please turn off cell phones and pagers for the duration of the concert. Thank you.

green is passing (1999, rev. 2006) for Piano and Electronics	Jeff Herriott
Confetti Variations (2012) for Piano and Fixed Media	Tom Lopez
Crystal Springs (2011) for Piano and Fixed Media	Phillip Schroeder
Summer Phantoms: Nocturne (2011) for Piano and Fixed Media	Brian Belet
The Pleasure of Being Lost (2012) for Piano and Fixed Media	Jim Fox
Swirling Sky (2011) for Piano and Fixed Media	Ed Martin

## About the Composers and Notes . . .

**Jeff Herriott** is attracted to sounds that shift and bend at the edges of perception. He creates unhurried music, using slow-moving shapes and a free sense of time. His work has been supported by awards and commissions from the MATA Festival, the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition, the American Composers Forum's Jerome Composers Commissioning Program, the American Music Center Composers Assistance Program, and a McKnight Foundation Visiting Composer Residency. Herriott is Associate Professor of Music at the University of Wisconsin at Whitewater.

The initial version of *green is passing* was composed in 1999. It opened with pulseless material that would become typical of my later work. In 2006, when I reworked the piece for a performance by pianist-composer Dante Boon, I retained this opening structure, but changed the piece's development to better suit my evolved musical style. At that time I worked almost exclusively on pieces that combined acoustic and electronic sounds, so I also created an alternate version that included a layer of electronic reverb as a fluctuating compositional element, a "conceptual echo." Jeri-Mae Astolfi premiered this electronically enhanced version in 2010. —JH

created from the timbres and rhythms of her voice as well as piano and bell tones. The piano part simply drifts alongside the fixed sounds, quite indirectly commenting—or seeming to comment—on them. —JF

**Ed Martin's** music has been performed throughout the world, including the World Saxophone Congress, the International Computer Music Conference, the Seoul International Computer Music Festival, Confluences: Art and Technology at the Edge of the Millennium (Spain), the Soundings Festival (Scotland), Nuclea Musica Nueva de Montevideo (Uruguay), the International Electroacoustic Music Festival (Chile), the New York Electronic Music Festival, Electronic Music Midwest, the Florida Electro-acoustic Music Festival, and various SEAMUS conferences. An expert on the music of Magnus Lindberg, Martin is Associate Professor of Music at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, where he administers the electronic music studio. He has music released on the Parma/Ravello, SEAMUS, University of Illinois, and Mark Records labels.

*Swirling Sky* begins by recalling peaceful moments spent lying in the grass, gazing at cloud formations drifting above. These shapes often spark my imagination, evoking images of magical characters, fantastic creatures, and primordial landscapes. As the piece progresses, it depicts losing oneself in the moment and being swept up through the clouds into an extraordinary adventure. *Swirling Sky* was composed for Jeri-Mae Astolfi. —EM

**Jeri-Mae G. Astolfi** is a Canadian-born pianist whose playing has been lauded as "brilliant" (*New Music Connoisseur*), "persuasive" (*Sequenza21*), and "beautiful" (*American Record Guide*). Her repertoire, ranging from the Renaissance era through the present, clearly affirms her keen interest in new music, which has led her to commission and premiere many new solo and collaborative works—music that has been featured on live radio broadcasts and released by Albany Records and Ravello Records' Capstone Collection (including multiple CDs for the Performers' Recording Series of the Society of Composers, Inc.). Astolfi is the soloist for the Wisconsin Soundscapes commissioning and touring project (sponsored by the Wisconsin Alliance for Composers and the Wisconsin Arts Board) and a founding member, with Holly Roadfeldt, of the duoARTia piano duo.

The recipient of numerous awards and grants, Astolfi's passion for new music has been recognized by invitations to many regional, national, and international music forums, where she has premiered and lectured on new piano music. Astolfi also frequently serves as a piano clinician, coach, and master class instructor. An active member in various local, state, and national music

Composer-performer **Brian Belet**, whose compositions for acoustic and electro-acoustic media have been performed throughout the world, lives with his wife, artist-poet Marianne Bickett, in Campbell, California. He is Professor of Music at San Jose State University and a member of the performance ensemble SoundProof, which he co-founded with Stephen Ruppenthal and Patricia Strange in 2009. Belet is also a member of the Society for Electro-Acoustic Music in the United States, the International Computer Music Association, the Electronic Music Foundation, and the Society of Composers, Inc. His music has been released on the Centaur, Capstone, IMG Media, Frog Peak and Innova labels.

*Phantom*

- *something apparent to sense but with no substantial existence; as an apparition*
- *representation of something abstract, ideal, or incorporeal*  
(from the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*)

Referential archetypical symbols include the phantom (akin to the shadow), representing the creativity we don't realize we already have; the night and the night journey, as the search for self; and the summer season, as a time of life and abundance.

When working on *Summer Phantoms:Nocturne*, written for Jeri-Mae Astolfi, I composed the piano music first, with marginal annotations about the electronics. The fixed media part is made up of piano sounds (string scrapes, hand dampened tones, soundboard strikes, and isolated tones) that I processed through Spectral Analysis, Sum of Sines, Time Alignment Utility, and additional stochastic algorithms using my COMP2 suite of tools, all operating within Kyma. —BB

**Jim Fox's** usually quiet, slow, lyrical, and unassuming music has been performed throughout the US and in Europe and used in a few films. Described by critics as “austere” and “ethereal” (*The Wire*), as well as “sensuous” and “suffused with a beautiful sadness” (*Fanfare*), his work has been recorded on the Cold Blue, CRI, Advance, Grenadilla, Raptoria Caam, and Citadel labels. Fox is director of the Cold Blue Music record label in Venice, California.

*The pleasure of being lost* was written for Jeri-Mae G. Astolfi in the winter of 2011–12. Its “fixed” part features the speaking voice of Janyce Collins (who is also prominently heard in my 1992 piece *The Copy of the Drawing*). She reads a text I freely derived from nineteenth-century naturalist and world traveler (and Charles Darwin pal) Joseph Dalton Hooker's *Himalayan Journals* (1854). Woven with this text are streams of electronically processed sounds

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**Tom Lopez** composes for acoustic instruments, electronics, noise, and “aural traces.” His imaginative music has been described in the *New York Concert Review* as “astonishing and riveting...of sparkling, almost celestial beauty.” He has received awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Aaron Copland Fund, Meet the Composer, and the Fulbright Foundation and has had residencies at the Banff Centre, MacDowell Colony, Copland House, Blue Mountain Center, and Djerassi. His work may be heard on the CDs released by the innova, Centaur, Vox Novus, SCI, and SEAMUS labels. Lopez teaches at the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music, where he directs the Contemporary Music Division.

Jeri-Mae Astolfi told me that among her admired composers of piano music were Johannes Brahms and Morton Feldman. That pairing struck me as a remarkable combination and I began dreaming of a Brahms/Feldman/Lopez mashup. My composition process entailed shredding Brahms and Feldman piano music into brightly colored fragments, firing the sparkly bits into the air, and listening to them rain down over field recordings. The resulting music, *Confetti Variations*, begins with distilled Brahms shavings and expands into dilated Feldman resonances. It is a journey between extremes with unexpected topography along the way. —TL

**Phillip Schroeder**’s music for soloists, chamber ensembles, live electronics, orchestra, and choir, has been described as “shimmering” (John Schaefer, WNYC), “rich in subtle detail” (*New Classics*), and “haunting” (*Sequenza21*). His musical life is diverse, paralleling the diversity of his surroundings (having lived in twelve states). He composes prolifically, concertizes as a pianist, improvises with a variety of ensembles, and conducts orchestral and chamber groups. His music appears on the innova, Ravello/Capstone, Boston Records, Vienna Modern Masters, and Cold Blue labels. He teaches at Henderson State University.

*Crystal Springs* was composed for Jeri-Mae Astolfi. The music alludes to the lush, rugged beauty of Crystal Springs, Arkansas, as well as imaginary springs that I envision issuing spiraling crystalline structures. The piece’s three large sections, which each develop different aspects of its fundamental motifs, were designed by use of the Fibonacci series. Its “fixed” materials are electronically manipulated sounds from an electric bass, a suspended cymbal, and the inside of a piano. —PS

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