

PROGRAM NOTES

The **“24 Character Preludes”** were composed in 2001 and each prelude is designed to explore one or more pianistic technical or musical problems. At the same time, the collection serves as excellent preparatory repertoire for the more complex character pieces of the great masters of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Each prelude is only one or two pages in length, which allows students the opportunity to perform several preludes in a group while exploring romantic, impressionistic, or contemporary styles. The sounds of Bach, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Rachmaninoff, Debussy, Ravel, Gershwin, Prokofieff and Copeland are echoed within the pieces of this collection. The sequence of preludes (the major key followed by its parallel minor rather than its relative minor) follows a tradition started by J.S. Bach in his Well-Tempered Clavier. Mr. Alexander has recorded the preludes and the CD is available with the collection **“24 Character Preludes”**.

“With These Hands” was written not long after the very untimely death of my handsome and talented son, Darren Andrew Alexander who passed away at the age of 23 on June 18, 1998. The collection is a musical tribute to the life of a very special young man who, during his short time on earth, managed to touch so many lives with his sensitive and caring soul, his artistic talent and his love of nature and all things beautiful. Each piece represents something significant and meaningful in his life. This collection, along with several solos and a collection entitled **“Planet Earth”** is available on CD with Dennis Alexander, pianist.

“Winter Rhapsody” was commissioned in 2008 by the Washington State University Piano Pedagogy Lab School in Pullman, WA. It’s a dramatic work that has become very popular in the Alexander library. **“Prelude and Toccata”** was written for a wonderful teacher in Arkansas who, through her **“adopt a composer program”**, adopted me for a year in 2006. It is now included in the National Federation of Music Clubs’ repertoire list. **“The Promise of Spring”** is found in a new collection entitled **“Especially in Romantic Style”**. The warm, lyrical melodies and the rich harmonies of this piece will appeal to pianists of all ages.

“The Great Northwest Suite” was written for the national MTNA convention, which was held in Seattle, WA in 2005. The suite highlights four states---Washington, Oregon, Montana and Idaho. The natural beauty of this area, combined with its history, is a backdrop to the music in the four movements of this suite. The majesty of the Washington Cascades is portrayed in the prologue, **“The Magnificent Cascades”**, by the rich chords and a lyrical melodic line. Relive the excitement of the Oregon Trail through the lively, syncopated rhythms of **“Travelin’ the Oregon Trail”**. The breathtaking beauty of Montana’s Glacier National Park is expressed through the tender melody of **“Many Glacier Arioso”**. The beautiful spotted Appaloosa horse is named after the Palouse Indians who lived along the Palouse River in northern Idaho and eastern Washington. The Palouse were renowned horse breeders and horse traders, and the Appaloosa horse was known for its distinctive spotted coat, its speed and its stamina. The last movement is an exciting finish to the suite with its fast tempo and constantly changing meters.