

James Adler
pianist and composer

Reflections

Wednesday Noonday Concerts
The Interchurch Center
October 23, 2024

Program

- Henco Espag Mistieke Feetjies (“Mystical Fairies”) (2022)
Dedicated to James Adler
- Paul Turok Little Suite for Piano, Op. 9 (1976)
 III. Toccata
In celebration of a joyous friendship and collaboration
- Robert Schumann Kinderszenen (“Scenes from Childhood”), Op. 15 (1838)
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 for Piano Solo (2022-2023)
 III. 1726 (1726 Locust Street)
*Commissioned by and dedicated to the Curtis Institute of Music
as part of their Centenary Commissioning Initiative 100x100*

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James Adler, pianist and composer
Elegy Artist Management * www.elegyartistmanagement.com

James Adler is a Yamaha Artist
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About the Artists

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*). This program is taken from Mr. Adler’s latest album, *Reflections*. Henry Fogel writes in *Fanfare* (September 2024) that “Throughout, Adler shows himself to be a distinguished, thoughtful, imaginative pianist, and the recorded sound is perfect... An imaginatively programmed and beautifully played piano recital. Five Stars.” Mr. Adler’s recent album, *That Star in the Picture*, is a double award winner in the 2024 Intercontinental Music Awards Pangea Classical Category. The album was also recognized in 2023 by the Global Music Awards as a Silver Medal Winner – Outstanding Achievement in the Composer category, and it landed on the 2023 Top 20 Classical (Vocal) recording list of *textura*.

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.

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.

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 faculty at St. 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.

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

Henco Espag Mistieke Feetjies (2022)

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 breathes to induce a sense of calm and groundedness.

The slower first section is build 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*

Paul Turok Little Suite for Piano, Op. 9 (1976)

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; 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*

James Adler A Curtis Reflection for Piano Solo (2022-2023)

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** for piano solo, approximately 12 minutes long, in three movements. Thank you, Nick, Roberto, and your wonderful and supportive team!

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 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, *brillante* ending in C Major. Enjoy! — *James Adler*