

My 9 Sonatas for piano solo occupy about 20 years of composing. Their styles range from audience friendly tonal, to more cerebral albeit virtuosic and on the border of tonality, such as the B-A-C-H variations. Sonata 6 features a fantasia on Stravinsky's 'Babel', friendly like S's middle period music, followed by an unabashedly romantic Romance, and then a series of variations on a substantial Fanfare. The Americas Sonata was written for Joel Martin. The title recalls the last two movements: the 2nd based on a South American folk song, and the last a series of death defying variations on The Battle Hymn of the Republic - which include canons at consecutive intervals - ending in cascades of runs and octaves. The Portrait sonata paints music pictures of great composers: Debussy, Stravinsky, Beethoven and Mozart (this last one being a copy of the form of the last mve. of Symphony #41).

The Partita can be played on either harpsichord or piano and is completely in the style of a Baroque suite: Fantasia or prelude, allemande, courante, sarabande and gigue. The Elements sonata reminds us of Luciano Berio's sonata of the same name. In fact I was his teaching assistant at Harvard! The sequence is water, earth, air and fire. The big set of variations on the BACH name is modeled after JS Bach's great 'Goldberg' Variations, featuring consecutive canons and variations of extremely differing textures. The first and shorter version was played at the Paris Theatre de Champs-Elysees in 1991. I have since added to it to make a total of 30 variations, like the Goldbergs.

Sonata 7, transcribed by Rafael Lukas, is based on the first movement of my own 'Sibley Requiem', followed by a celestial Adagio, and another fugue on the BACH theme, originally a work for organ, then piano four hands, and now piano solo. The eighth sonata, also transcribed by Lukas, is originally a work for cello. The opening mve is like a rhythmic piece of Stravinsky, the second a short passacaglia on a seven chord theme, and the last a series of variations on the popular tune 'My Country 'Tis of Thee...' In the sonata #9 I have composed a finale based on the structure of Beethoven's Sonata opus 106, called the 'Hammerclavier'. It is shorter and easier to play than the B example, but fast and brilliant. The opening tango prepares the listener for the introduction to the fugue: a emotional adagio.

Piano Yamaha 7'5, Steve Epstein engineer and editor.