

A close-up, artistic photograph of the interior of a piano, focusing on the strings and hammers. The lighting is warm and dramatic, highlighting the metallic surfaces and the intricate arrangement of the strings. The text is overlaid on this background.

The Music of

Joseph Baber

Piano Works

Ian Stewart, pianist

About the Music

Kingdom of the Heart's Content is a collection of twelve piano sketches from the 1950s, when Baber was in high school. Most of these pieces were inspired by specific seasons and places in the Fan District of Richmond, Virginia, where he grew up. Some sketches are highly improvisatory and fragmentary, but all possess an innocent charm.

While in college at Michigan State University, Baber studied viola under Lyman Bodman. Bodman's wife, Virginia, was a phenomenal sightreader who would often have friendly sightreading competitions with the assistant director of the Westminster Choir, Warren Martin. Dr. Baber's contribution to this competition was the six *Preludes for Virginia Bodman*, a collection of challenging sight-reading exercises that gave the four of them many a night's laughter.

After hearing a performance of one of Bach's English Suites in 1971, Baber decided to write a *Partita* to serve as a "baroque refuge" for himself as he dealt with the emotional events surrounding his first wife's terminal illness and his intensive work on the dark opera *Frankenstein*. Kazuo loved hearing the piece as it was being developed, and the final movement to be composed, the Sarabande, was written as a moving tribute to her after she passed away.

The *Six Sinfonias* were composed in 1980 as a wedding present for a close friend, Catherine McGlasson. Each piece captures a different aspect of her personality, but all highlight her personal introspectiveness.

About the Composer

Dr. Joseph Baber was born in 1937 in Richmond, Virginia, and began composing at an early age. He has written more than 100 works, including song cycles, choral works, dances, sonatas, divertimentos, symphonies, concerti, and several operas. He is the composer-in-residence at the University of Kentucky.



These recordings are the result of an 18-month collaboration between the performer and the composer. Five major collections of piano works were edited for publication by the performer, and four of these five collections were recorded and are presented here. Scores are available for purchase at www.babermusic.com.

About the Performer

Ian Stewart (b. 1997) is an undergraduate student in math, computer science, and music at the University of Kentucky. He studies piano under Dr. Paul Nitsch, at Queens University in NC, and studies composition with Dr. Baber. Ian enjoys writing music for various ensembles, accompanying students and choirs, and performing for church, family, and friends.



Contents

Total running time 63:04

Kingdom of the Heart's Content, Op. 11 *running time 17:37*

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|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Introduction: Stick Horses 0:50 | 7. Cycling 0:52 |
| 2. Walk to Monroe Park 1:55 | 8. Sleighbells 2:33 |
| 3. Charlie Short 0:40 | 9. Park Avenue Triangle 1:08 |
| 4. Tag 1:08 | 10. Goblins 1:42 |
| 5. Monument Avenue 1:28 | 11. Spring 1:58 |
| 6. Battle Abbey 1:23 | 12. Finale: West End Farewell 2:00 |

Six Preludes for Virginia Bodman, Op. 14 *running time 11:19*

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|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 13. Allegro 1:57 | 16. Moderato ("Gottschalk") 2:16 |
| 14. Allegro molto 2:02 | 17. Allegro 0:55 |
| 15. Moderato 1:58 | 18. Leggiero 2:11 |

Partita for Keyboard, Op. 38 *running time 18:08*

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| 19. Overture 4:20 | 22. Sarabande 5:36 |
| 20. Air 2:29 | 23. Gigue 2:13 |
| 21. Gavotte 3:30 | |

Six Sinfonias for Piano, Op. 47 *running time 16:00*

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| 24. Tranquillo 3:23 | 27. Capriccioso 3:00 |
| 25. With smug satisfaction 2:08 | 28. Semplice 1:21 |
| 26. Molto cantabile 2:39 | 29. Energico 3:29 |