

Remembering Leo Smit (1921-1999)



University at Buffalo Music Library Exhibit
Curated and written by John Bewley

October 2005



Leo Smit in California, circa 1996

Leo Smit was fond of quoting the following passage from a letter that Beethoven wrote in 1812 to a young musical admirer named Emilie. In a way it serves as a credo for the extraordinarily rich musical and artistic life that Leo Smit led.

Persevere, do not only practice your art, but endeavor also to fathom its inner meaning; it deserves this effort. For only art and knowledge can raise men to the level of gods.

Leo Smit's career as composer, pianist, conductor, and educator spanned seven decades of musical life in the United States. He established close working relationships, and/or friendships, with many of the most prominent musicians of the 20th century, including Igor Stravinsky, Béla Bartók, Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, Harold Shapero, William Schuman, Alex Haieff, Leopold Stokowski, and Lukas Foss. As a performer, Smit was an enthusiastic and persuasive advocate and interpreter of the music of his time, especially the solo piano music of Aaron Copland. His

compositional output totals more than one hundred works, including two operas, three symphonies, more than ninety songs, two ballets, and numerous chamber and piano works.

Smit was also a talented photographer. In addition to the many photographs he took of noted musicians, Smit also used his skill as a photographer to capture images from his travels. Many of his travel pictures reflect his reverence for nature. As part of his innovative approach to programming, Smit would often include displays of his photography in his theme-based concerts.

During his career Leo Smit earned several awards and honors, including Fulbright (piano) and Guggenheim (composition) Fellowships in 1950, a fellowship at the American Academy in Rome for 1950-51, the Boston Symphony Merit Award in 1953 for his Symphony No. 1 (premiered October 16, 1953 by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Charles Munch), the New York Critics Circle Award in 1957 (also for his Symphony No. 1), his selection as an artist for a State Department concert tour of Latin America in 1967-68, and the Buffalo Evening News Man of the Year award in 1969. As an educator, Smit held positions at Sarah Lawrence College (1947-49), UCLA (1957-63), and the State University of New York at Buffalo (1962-84).

This online exhibit is principally based upon an exhibit held at the State University of New York at Buffalo Music Library in April 2000. The Music Library gratefully acknowledges the loan of materials from the estate of Leo Smit by Nils Vigeland.

The Early Years

Leo Smit was born to Russian immigrants on January 12, 1921, in Philadelphia. He received his earliest musical training from his father, Kolman Smit, beginning at age five.



Kolman Smit, with Leo Smit in the background

Kolman Smit was a professional violinist who performed in the Philadelphia Orchestra (1926-1931) under Leopold Stokowski, the Cincinnati Symphony under Fritz Reiner, and the NBC Symphony under Arturo Toscanini.

Leo Smit's Friends and Associates

In April 1999 Leo Smit wrote an autobiographical sketch for the program notes accompanying the Bridge Records compact disc recording (Bridge 9080) of 33 Songs on Poems of Emily Dickinson. It provides a summary of the most significant friendships in his life and the meaning he derived from them.

I was born in Philadelphia in 1921 and lived over a Chinese laundry; migrated first to Cincinnati, following my father, violinist with Fritz Reiner; to Moscow at the age of eight with my mother, where I scholarshipped with Dmitri Kabalevsky (who taught me adagio); then via Curtis Institute scholarship to New York City and Isabella Vengerova (who taught me legato) and José Iturbi (who taught me forte); Nicolas Nabokov, who taught me music and ordered my first composition (father now with Arturo Toscanini at NBC); Igor Stravinsky, who rehearsed me as pianist at age 15 in three of his ballets for George Balanchine's American Ballet; and Aaron Copland, who freed my last lingering musical inhibitions, and who conducted my Capriccio for String Orchestra so beautifully one lovely afternoon at the Ojai Festival.

Then Valerie Bettis, who danced to my music (Virginia Sampler, Yerma), lifting it off the ground; an afternoon with Béla Bartók, when I played Schumann, Debussy and his Mikrokosmos, and he brought me a glass of freshly squeezed orange juice with a rare smile; the golden years in Rome with the high-spirited companionship of Alexei Haieff, Harold Shapero and Lukas Foss; later in California, drawn into the galactic mind of Fred Hoyle, who guided me down the Grand Canyon ('Even Bartók cannot compete with Nature's stridency', I overheard him saying to the Canyon) and who taught me some of the facts of matter in a great and subtle masterpiece, the Universe; the profound poets, Theodor Roethke (who asked me for the "poop" on Mozart), W. H. Auden (who had the "poop" on Mozart), and Anthony Hecht (who loved the "poop" on Mozart); Frank Brown, whose vast knowledge and dramatic gifts brought the ancient Roman world to life; Paul Pascal, who translated amorous Ovid and bawdy Martial for my private pleasure, and Naomi Pascal, who taught me how to write English (I already knew how not to); the painters Jennings Tofel, who gave me drawing lessons when I was five, Seymour Drumlevitch and Harriet Greif, who allowed me to watch how pictures are painstakingly made, and Eugene Berman, who mentally drew me as a pianist-centaur (did he know that Liszt had been so described?); Leonard Bernstein, who set a high-jump record while conducting the climax of my Second Symphony; Mary Goodwin and her friends from the Taos pueblo-singing, dancing and drumming under the New Mexican night sky filled with infinity of cold, clear stars; and Emily Dickinson, who has been running my life for the past ten years and inspiring me to write songs to eight y-three of her stupendous poems.

Leo Smit and Igor Stravinsky



Leo Smit (left) with Igor Stravinsky,
1937

Photograph by Eric Schaal (?)

At the age of 15 Leo Smit was hired in 1936 as rehearsal pianist to prepare the opera ballets for the productions of the Metropolitan Opera House. The ballet performed under the direction of choreographer George Balanchine, director of the American Ballet Company. The job brought Smit his first opportunity to meet and work with Igor Stravinsky when Stravinsky's ballet *Jeu de Cartes* was scheduled for performance in April 1937.

Smit wrote the following description of Stravinsky's playing for an article that appeared in a Stravinsky commemorative issue of *Perspectives of New Music* in 1971.

In some unaccountable way, without technique (he sometimes glissanded what should have been fingered scales), without beauty of tone (he poked the keys with his large, bony fingers, muting the dynamics with the left pedal while tapping rhythmically on the right pedal), and keeping time by vigorous gasping counting, he succeeded in conveying the meaning of his musical thought with extraordinary clarity. By following the printed notes and carefully listening to the sounds issuing from the piano and from his mouth -- indeed his whole body was tense with music -- I was able to grasp in an entirely new way the composer's intentions as expressed in the subtle relationship between the fixed symbols of notation and the fluxed pitches of physical sound. By the time he finished playing, I felt I had been initiated into the most secret of Mysteries.



*Leo Smit (center) with Igor Stravinsky, 1937
Photograph by Eric Schaal (?)*

Leo Smit's Friends and Associates: Aaron Copland



*Aaron Copland and Leo Smit at the
92nd St. YMHA in New York City,
November 16, 1980.
Photograph by Irving Copland.*

Aaron Copland and Leo Smit met for the first time in 1943. Smit had received a copy of Copland's *Piano Sonata*, and once he had learned the work, arranged to meet Copland to play it for him. Copland was impressed with Smit's musical interpretation and the two quickly developed a friendship that lasted until Copland's death in 1990. Copland, known for lending his support to young musicians, encouraged Smit's compositional efforts and introduced Smit to his circle of friends. David Diamond, Harold Shapero, and Elliott Carter were among the many prominent musicians that Smit met through his association with Aaron Copland.

Copland introduced Smit to Leonard Bernstein in 1943 at a Carnegie Hall concert where Smit was acting as page-turner for Béla Bartók during a performance of Bartók's *Sonata for two pianos and percussion*. Three years later, in October 1946, Smit was the soloist in performances of Copland's *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* with the New York City Symphony, conducted by Leonard Bernstein. These were the first performances of the piece in the United States in sixteen years, and all previous performances had been with Copland as the soloist. Copland wrote of the Bernstein and Smit performances:

Lenny and Leo handled the rhythmic complexities of the Concerto with ease. Leo is a far better pianist than I - I had played the work like a composer, while he was a dazzling performer with enormous vitality and yet he kept everything absolutely clean and precise.



Aaron Copland (conducting) and Leo Smit at the May 1958 Ojai Festival.

Bernstein and Smit continued to work together throughout their careers, including Smit's stint as pianist with Bernstein's New York City Symphony, 1947-48 and Bernstein's performances of Smit's *Symphony No. 2* with the New York Philharmonic in 1966.

In 1958, Copland and Smit were participants at the Ojai Festival in California. Copland conducted a performance of Smit's *Capriccio for String Orchestra* on May 23rd at the festival. Smit fondly recalled the performance in the autobiographical program notes he wrote for the Bridge Records release of his *33 Songs on Poems of Emily Dickinson* in April 1999. At the same festival, Copland conducted a performance of Alex Haieff's *Piano Concerto No. 1* with Smit as piano soloist. Haieff composed the work for Smit while they were both in Rome as Fellows at the American Academy (1950-51). Smit was also the soloist at the premiere performance of the work with the CBS Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Leopold Stokowski in April 1952.

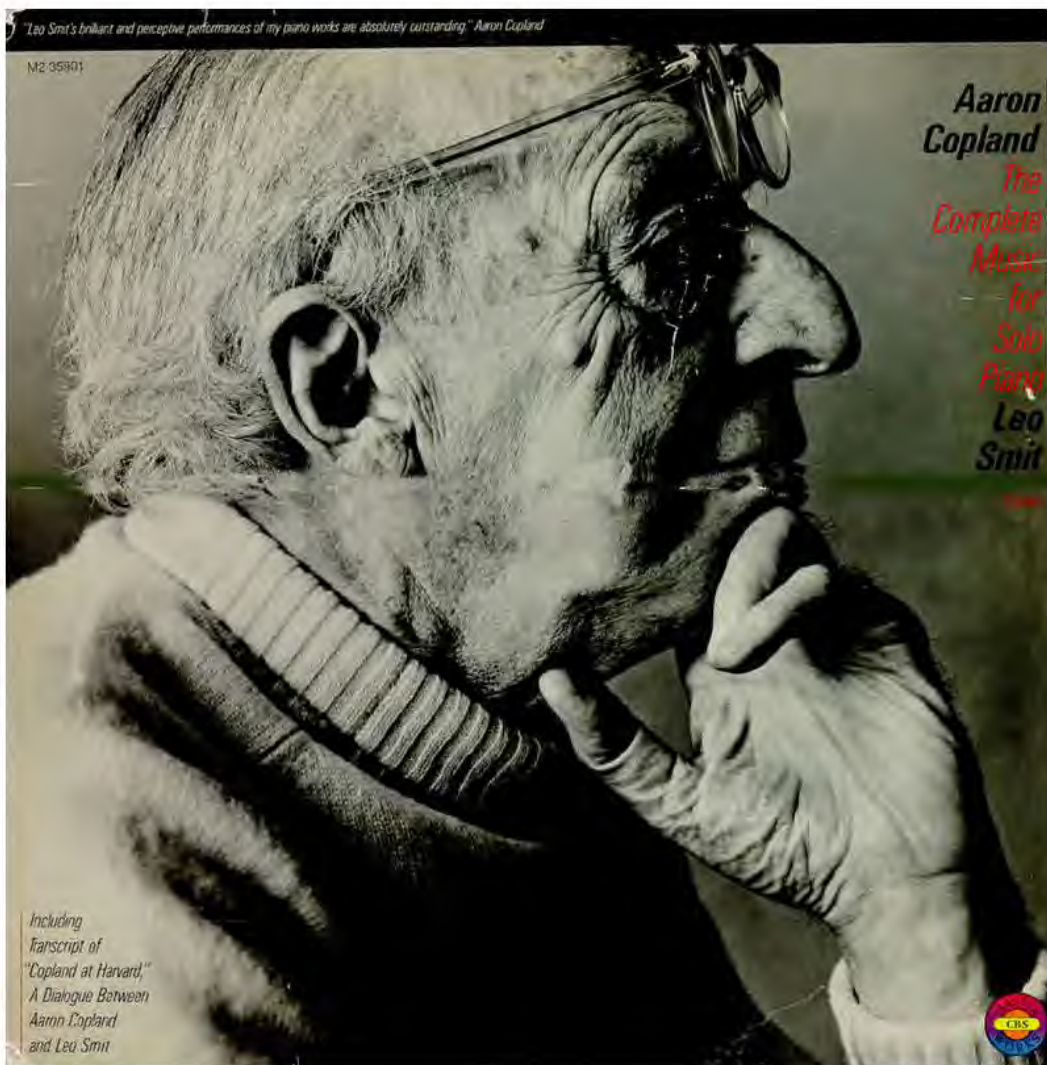


*Morton Feldman, Leo Smit, and Aaron Copland, June 1, 1977 on the campus of the State University of New York at Buffalo
Photograph by Edward L. Nowak*

For his part, Leo Smit was always an advocate for Copland's music. In addition to his performances of the solo piano works and the *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*, Smit also arranged Copland's *The Second Hurricane* and *Danzón Cubano* for solo piano. Copland found the first arrangement too simple for concert performance, so did not approve its publication. The arrangement of *Danzón Cubano* was published by Boosey & Hawkes in 1949, but is rarely performed due to its high level of difficulty. In addition to his work on the two arrangements, Smit also edited the 1981 Boosey & Hawkes publication of a collection of Copland's solo piano compositions.

Leo Smit was the first pianist to present a program of all of Copland's piano music. The first of these concerts took place on June 1, 1977, at a June in Buffalo festival concert at the State University of New York at Buffalo. Later, in November of the same year, he repeated the program at Harvard University and Carnegie Hall.

In January 1978 Smit recorded the complete solo piano music of Copland for Columbia Records. Included in the compositions is *Four Piano Blues*, the first of which was written for Leo Smit.



Leo Smit with Aaron Copland in Copland's studio, around the time that Smit recorded Copland's complete solo piano music

Aaron Copland's 80th birthday in 1980 was celebrated in many venues across the United States. The actual date of his birthday, November 14th, was reserved for a special, gala performance by the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

ROGER L. STEVENS, *Chairman*
MARTA ISTOMIN, *Artistic Director*

CONCERT HALL

National Symphony Orchestra

MSTISLAV ROSTROPOVICH, *Music Director*

FEDERICA REGÓN, 1940-1981

Friday Evening, November 14, 1980 at 8:30

Participating Artists, in order of appearance:
MSTISLAV ROSTROPOVICH, *Conducting* ADEL SANCHEZ, *Trumpet*
AARON COPLAND, *Conducting/Narrator* ELO SMIT, *Piano*
RICHARD WHITE, *English Horn* LEONARD BERNSTEIN, *Conducting*

Aaron Copland 80th Birthday Salute

"Fanfare for the Common Man"

Mr. Rostropovich, *Conducting*

Suite from the Ballet "Appalachian Spring"

Mr. Copland, *Conducting*

"El Salón México"

Mr. Rostropovich, *Conducting*

Intermission

"Quiet City"

Mr. Rostropovich, *Conducting*

Mr. White, *English Horn*

Mr. Sanchez, *Trumpet*

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra

Mr. Copland, *Conducting*

Mr. Smit, *Piano*

"Lincoln Portrait"

Mr. Bernstein, *Conducting*

Mr. Copland, *Narrator*

Proceeds from this concert benefit The Musician's Pension Fund.

The Elizabeth C. and Richard W. Aldrich Research Institute Fund
(Endowed by the Aldrich Foundation)

Sponsor: Pepsi-Cola Columbia, Deutsche Grammophon and London Records

The taking of photographs and the use of recording equipment are not allowed in this audience.
Banned is the use of official press and electronic organs of the Kennedy Center.

17A



Leo Smit with Aaron Copland and Leonard Bernstein backstage at the Kennedy Center, November 14, 1980

President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, were in attendance. Conductors on the all-Copland program included Mstislav Rostropovich, Leonard Bernstein, and Copland. Leo Smit was the soloist in Copland's *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*, with Copland conducting. Smit continued the celebration of Copland's 80th birthday when he performed a program of Copland's solo piano music two days later at the 92nd St. YMHA in New York City.



Leo Smit, with Rosalynn Carter, Aaron Copland, President Jimmy Carter, Leonard Bernstein, and Mstislav Rostropovich at the November 14, 1980 concert honoring Copland's 80th birthday at the Kennedy Center, Washington, D. C.

Leo Smit was often asked to provide commentary about Copland and his music. Vivian Perlis interviewed Smit in 1981 for the book she co-authored with Copland, *Copland, Since 1943*. In the interview Smit described the piano playing of Aaron Copland as follows:

I always admired Aaron's own piano playing because of the clarity with which he was able to convey the intent of his musical thought, without gorgeous tonal quality or brilliant technique. Yet the rhythmic drive, for one thing, had such an infectious quality of joy. It came out of his whole physical being. And his lonely melodies, the sense of isolation and the stopping of time. I thought his playing unique, extraordinary. I didn't mind the barsbness of his tone. I'd rather have that than a crooning, "poetic" touch.

Smit wrote the following tribute to Aaron Copland on the occasion of Copland's 70th birthday in 1970.

One of the special characteristics of musical genius is embodied in the cuckoo instinct. This interesting bird, which is anything but foolish, lays its eggs in other bird's nests, always selecting the nests of smaller birds. The large, noisy baby cuckoos, upon hatching, demand and receive preferential feeding at the expense of the legitimate fledglings and consequently grow up faster and stronger. The composer who captures other bird's nests make them work for him, increasing his productivity and, depending upon the location of the nest and the nature of the surrogate-parent, enriching the quality of his musical progeny.

J. S. Bach, the Olympian cuckoo of the 18th century, deposited many pretty eggs throughout musical Europe; in England and France, where fancy suites were hatched; in Italy, which nurtured volumes of variations and concerti; in Spain, which incubated the once wildly sensuous Saraband and Chaconne, now tamed and idealized.

And Beethoven, the aquiline cuckoo of the Vienna Woods - who immortalized his two-note signature in the Pastoral Symphony - turned his fiercely paternal instincts, not so much onto other bird's nests, as towards other species, lavishing his ferocious affection on the Handelian and Cherubinian genera. With prophetic aim he also burl'd a clutch of unusually heavy eggs into the nests of birds that did not yet exist, but which later came to be known as the Schubertian and Brahmsian species. (Some musical Audubonians actually list the Wagnerian Warbler as a sub-species.)

*There are 142 species of cuckoo in the Old World, but in North America we find only two genuine members of the cuckoo family - the Ivesian *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus* and the Coplandian *coccyzus americanus*. The roadrunner, though a member of the cuckoo clan, lacks artistic imagination, hence does its own rearing.*

The Ivesian nest was in the heart of rural, revolutionary New England and many immigrant and errant birds flying in from Holiday celebrations, Southern Plantations and Back Bay Churches were pleased to help raise the transcendental offspring, often in communal manses.

The Coplandian cuckoo, a tall, lean bird with strong beak, bemused kindly eyes and a bouncy hop, chose the entire Western hemisphere as its breeding site, but not before having intuitively flown to the ancestral European Nest. For a few years Bohemian Paris offered her charm, wit and strict artistic standards. When the migratory period came to an end, this remarkably mature bird, knowing exactly what it had to do, took off for its native land, soaring high and far in search of the American Bald Eagle's elevated aerie.

He found it, and many more –

On the mountains and prairies,

Appalachian Spring and Billy the Kid;
In the towns and cities,
Our town and Quiet City;
In dance halls and circuses,
El Salon Mexico and the Red Pony;
On the battlefields and cornfields,
Lincoln Portrait and The Tender Land,
his operatic Hymn for the Universal Nest, our lonely Planet.

At age 70, and still rarin' to go, Aaron Copland can look down upon throbbing broods of fledglings of such liveliness, originality and personal beauty as to assure himself of a permanent perch alongside the greatest cuckoos that ever lived.



Aaron Copland, 1968

Leo Smit's Friends and Associates: Sir Fred Hoyle



Leo Smit and Sir Fred Hoyle

Sir Fred Hoyle (1915-), the British mathematician and astronomer, met Leo Smit in 1953 at a New York City social event. Hoyle had, in Smit's words, "a musical awareness that transcended many a professional musician's scope and understanding." Hoyle provided the libretti for two of Smit's compositions: the opera, *Alchemy of Love* (1969) and *Copernicus : Narrative and Credo* (1973), for four-part chorus, narrator and chamber ensemble. Hoyle also performed the part of narrator for the premiere performance and recording of *Copernicus*.



Pete Johnson (1904-1967) was a jazz pianist known for his boogie-woogie style of playing. He moved to Buffalo in 1950 and suffered a stroke in 1958 that left him partly paralyzed. Leo Smit, a jazz enthusiast, had admired Johnson's playing since first hearing him perform in the 1940s. He met Pete Johnson after moving to Buffalo and organized a benefit concert for him in 1964. The program for the concert included a brief biography of Pete Johnson.




PROGRAM

PETE JOHNSON
Plays
Blues and Boogie-Woogie
A Retrospective Discography

I - - Divo Bombers
Zero Hour
Mr. Freddie Blues
Ain't Goin' No Place (Peggy Lee)
Boo-Woo (Harry James)
Johnson and Turner Blues (Joe Turner)
Boogie-Woogie Prayer (Lewis, Johnson, Ammons)
627 Stomp
Minuet Boogie
Re-Pete Blues
Roal 'Em Pete

II - LEO SMIT Piano Selections
Concert Pianist and Professor in the School
of Music at the State University of Buffalo

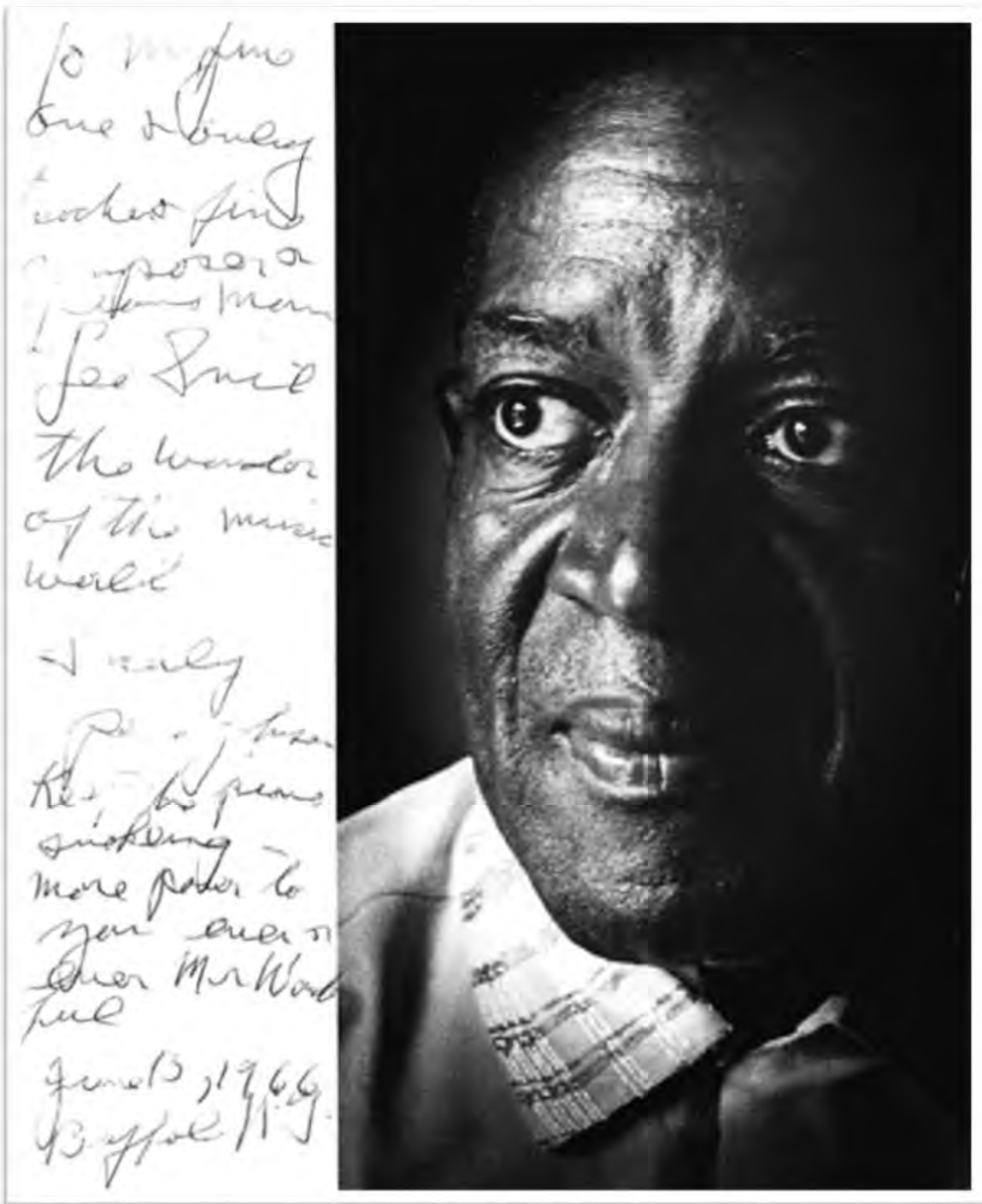
III - BILL NUWN Vocal Selections
My Buddy
Try A Little Tenderness
I'll Be Tired of You



PETE JOHNSON was born in Kansas City, Missouri on April 24, 1904. His uncle "Smash" Johnson, a pianist of local fame taught Pete the fundamentals of jazz piano. Johnson's first job in the early 1920's was as a drummer, but a few years later he turned to his true instrument, the piano. Shortly thereafter he teamed up with a singing bartender, Joe Turner, to bring the art of the blues and boogie-woogie to its highest point. In 1938 Pete and Joe made their debuts in an historic concert at Carnegie Hall entitled "From Spirituals to Swing." It was at this concert that the three greatest boogie-woogie pianists, Albert Ammons, Meade "Lux" Lewis and Pete Johnson were brought together for the first time. In 1950 Pete Johnson settled in Buffalo, New York concentrating his activities in this part of the country. During his last year of active playing - 1958 - Pete toured Europe and appeared at the Newport Jazz and the Berkshire Music Festivals. In the fall of 1958, a series of strokes ended the career of this great artist.

We pay tribute to Pete Johnson today, happy to have him in our midst and hopeful that before long he will again play the blues and boogie-woogie, as only he could.

CARROLL HARDY
LEO SMIT



Pete Johnson, with inscription to Leo Smit

Buffalo and Beyond

Leo Smit lived in Buffalo for thirty-six years. He moved to the city in 1962 when he was appointed Slee Visiting Professor of Music at the State University of New York at Buffalo. After a year in which he presented three well-received lecture-recitals, Smit was appointed to the full-time faculty of the music department in 1963. In this position he taught piano and composition until his retirement in 1984. Smit continued to live in Buffalo until 1998, when he moved to Southern California.

Smit presented the first of his Slee lecture-recitals, *Narrative, Thoughts, and Digressions*, on October 5, 1962.

The State University of New York at Buffalo
Music Department

PRESENTS

Leo Smit

Visiting Slee Professor of Composition
in the First of a series of Lecture-Recitals

"Narrative, Thoughts and Digressions"

PART I

PERFORMANCE by

Leo Smit, pianist

CAPEN HALL - BUTLER AUDITORIUM

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1962

8:30 P.M.

PROGRAM

LECTURE — LEO SMIT

"NARRATIVE, THOUGHTS AND DIGRESSIONS"

Part I

INTERMISSION

LEO SMIT

Piano

I

Partita IV in D Johann Sebastian Bach
Overture
Allouande
Courante
Arie
Sarabande
Menuet
Gigue

Arioso Variations (1948) Harold Shapera

II

Polonaise - Fantaisie Op. 61 Frederic Chopin
Sonata in One Movement (1931-33) Leo Smit
Lento - Allegro moderato - Larghetto - Allegro agitato

III


Not de sans Trist Wolfgang Amadieu Mozart

Schmuck Robert Schumann

Wenn wir in hochstem Norden sein Johann Sebastian Bach

You are cordially invited to a Reception
in the Lobby immediately following this program.

Smit often created innovative concert programs that combined musical genres or different media. One lecture-recital that he presented was *Self-portraits in Words and Music*. It combined musical selections and readings from diaries and letters from composers such as Mozart, Schumann, Chopin, Bartók, Schoenberg, and Stravinsky. Another of these thematic programs was *The Masters Write Jazz*. It was a program that he especially enjoyed presenting while on tours of foreign countries.



State University of New York at Buffalo
COLLEGE B Presents
LEO SMIT piano
THE MASTERS WRITE JAZZ?
Lecture-Recital
Elaine Sheehan, Soprano

Works by:
Igor Stravinsky
Darius Milhaud
Paul Hindemith
Aaron Copland
George Gershwin
Alexei Haieff
Leonard Bernstein
Cole Porter

Program

Igor Stravinsky
Darius Milhaud
Paul Hindemith
Aaron Copland
George Gershwin
Alexei Haieff
Leonard Bernstein

Piano Rag Music (1919)
Three Rag Caprices (1923)
Ragtime (1922)
Four Piano Blues (1926-1948)
Three Preludes (1927)
Minsky's Sans Souci
"West Side Story," arranged
by Leo Smit (1957)

Cole Porter, a group of songs, Elaine Sheehan, soprano

While in Buffalo, Smit had his music performed by the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra on two occasions. The first was in 1965 when he conducted the world premiere performance of his *Symphony No. 2*.

Lukas Foss, with whom Smit had been a Fellow at the American Academy in Rome in 1950-51, conducted Smit's *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* on November 24, 1968, with Smit as soloist.

**THE BUFFALO
PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA**

LUKAS FOSS
Conductor and Music Director

Sunday, November 24, 1968 — 3:30 P.M.
Tuesday, November 26, 1968 — 8:30 P.M.

LEO SMIT
Piano

YAKEMITSU
**The Dorian Horizon* (1966)
For saxophone string

SMIT
***Concerto for Orchestra and Piano* (1963)
In four movements played without pause.
Mr. Smit

HAYDN
**Piano Concerto in D Major* (c. 1784)
In three movements
Cadenza by Lindnerka Sest
Mr. Smit

SCHUBERT
Symphony No. 7 in C Major (1828)
In four movements

**First performance at this venue.*
***World Premiere.*

Directors' requests: please kindly leave your seat during the intermission.
**Times 5-2-3-2-1. (Indicate minutes before curtain.)*
Smoking in Cocktail Lounge and Vestibules — ONLY

The official plans of THE BUFFALO PHILHARMONIC (c. 1968)

Smit's life in Buffalo did not preclude him from continuing to present concerts abroad. In 1967-68 the State Department selected him as an artist to make a concert tour of sixteen Latin American countries.

la verdad

Caracas - Año 2 - N° 480
Sábado, 4 de marzo de 1967

Pianista Leo Smit Ofrecerá Concierto De Jazz en el CVA

LEO SMIT, talentoso pianista-compositor norteamericano, ofrecerá una serie de conciertos en Venezuela a partir del jueves 16 del presente mes, cuando será presentado por el Centro Venezolano-Americano a las 9 p.m.



EL PIANISTA-COMPOSITOR norteamericano Leo Smit, quien ofrecerá programas de música y jazz a partir del jueves 16 de marzo en el Centro Venezolano-Americano, bajo el Programa de Presentaciones Culturales del Departamento de Estado. (Foto IPS).

en un recital de música para piano del Siglo XX. Smit ofrecerá otro programa, "Los Maestros Componen el Jazz", en el CVA, el domingo 19 a las 4 p.m.

Smit llegará al país el martes 14 procedente de la República Dominicana donde iniciará su gira por América Latina, bajo el auspicio del Programa de Presentaciones Culturales del Departamento de Estado norteamericano.

En otras presentaciones en el Interior del país, Smit ofrecerá su programa de jazz el sábado 17 a las 8,30 p.m. en el Auditorio de la Facultad de Arquitectura de la Universidad del Zulia, en Maracaibo, patrocinado por la Sociedad de Conciertos del Zulia en cooperación con la Casa Americana. El lunes 20 Smit será presentado en el auditorio del Instituto Tecnológico de la Universidad de Oriente en Puerto La Cruz, a las 9 p.m.

Actualmente Smit es Profesor de Música de la Universidad del Estado de Nueva York en Buffalo. También es pianista profesional y compositor, mereciendo en 1953 el Premio de la Sinfónica de Boston al Mérito, y en 1957 el Premio del Círculo de Críticos de Nueva York por su Sinfonía N° 1, Nació en Filadelfia, Pensilvania, el 12 de enero de 1921.

Después de sus presentaciones en Venezuela, Smit se dirigirá a Georgetown, Belém (Brasil), Montevideo y Buenos Aires en su gira cultural por América Latina.

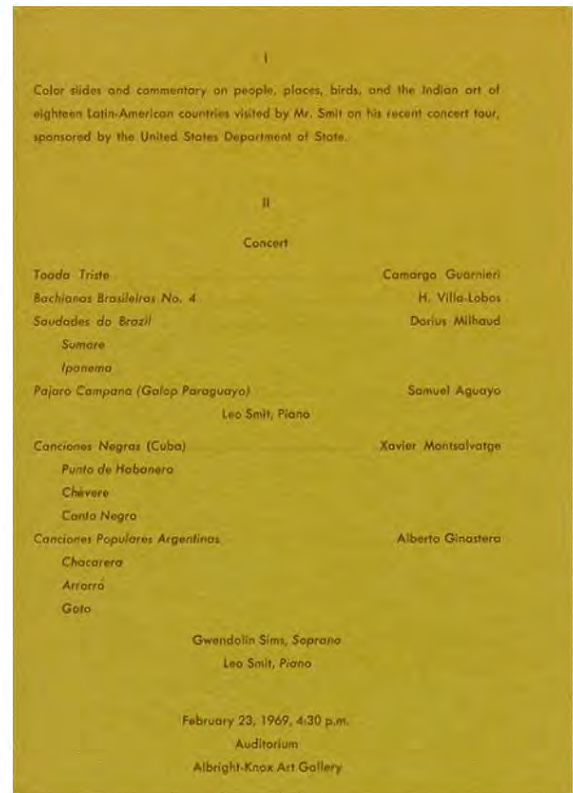
March 4, 1967, article about upcoming concerts by Leo Smit in Caracas, Venezuela, during his State Department tour.



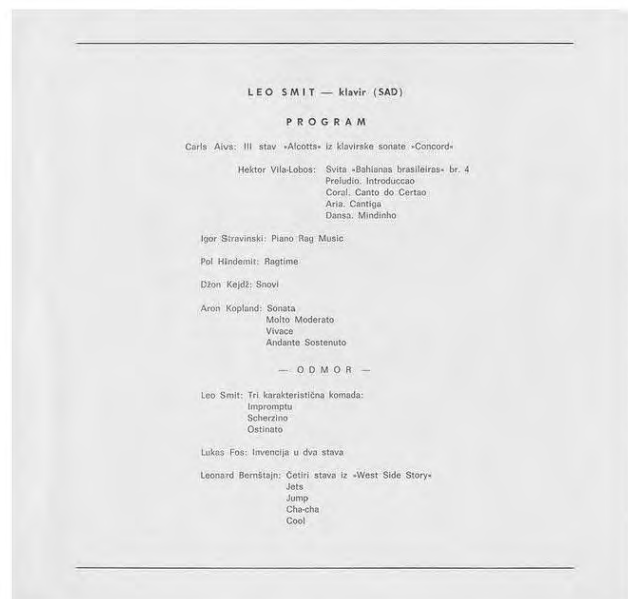
Leo Smit with students at the National Conservatory, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, March 10, 1967

On February 23, 1969, Smit presented a concert of Latin American music at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo. As part of the program he also showed slides from his travels in Latin American countries. This was one of several times that Smit presented a program of this sort, in which he combined visual and musical elements.

The photograph on the cover of the program features a photograph by Leo Smit of Machu Pichu in Peru.



Smit also made a tour of Eastern European countries in 1980, including Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. The trip to Russia allowed Smit to return to the land where his parents were born and where he had studied piano with Dmitri Kabalevsky as an eight-year old in 1929. The following program is from a concert that Smit presented on November 22, 1980, in Vojvodina, Yugoslavia.



Leo Smit as Photographer

Leo Smit was an avid and talented photographer. His large collection of photographs contains many images of the famous musicians with whom he was friends as well as pictures taken during his many travels.



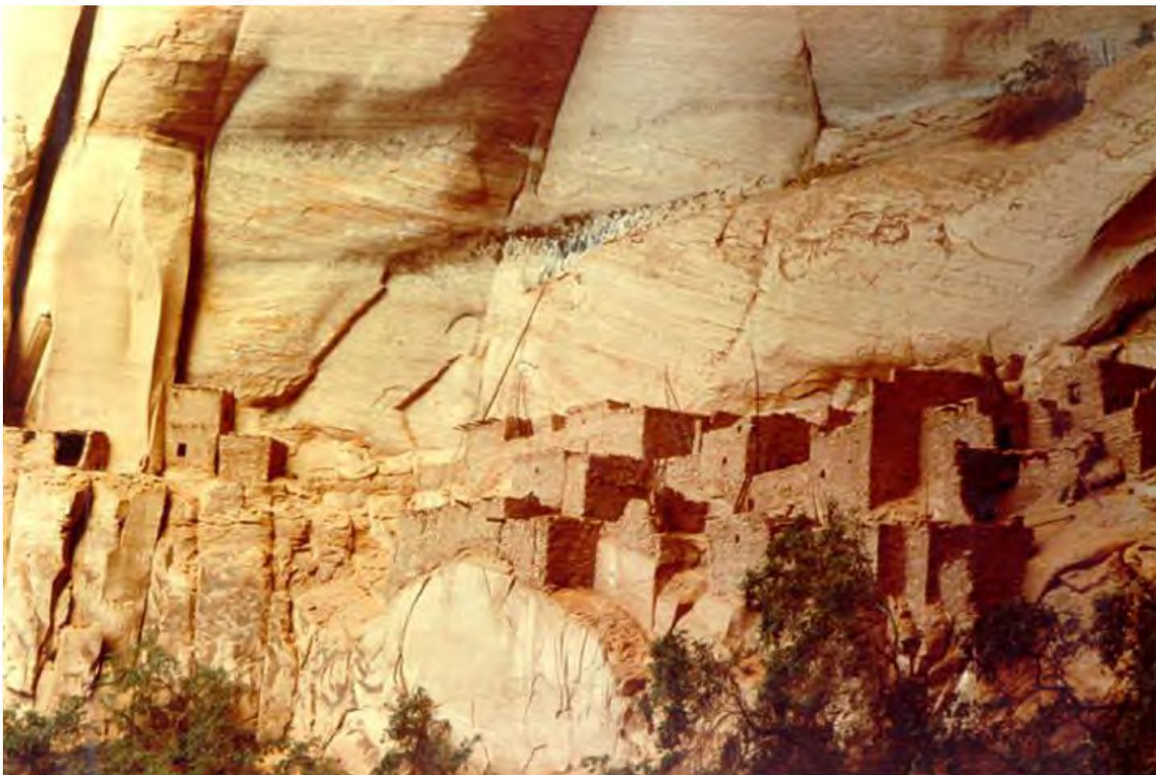
Leo Smit, self-portrait, Summer 1967



Children photographed by Leo Smit during his South American tour



*Leonard Bernstein / Leo Smit
1970*
Portrait of Leonard Bernstein by Leo Smit



*Canyon de Chelly, Arizona
Photograph by Leo Smit*

Smit presented slides from his Latin American State Department tour at a February 23, 1969 concert at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery. Leo Smit's photographs of Rome were displayed at the Opus 5 Art Studio in January 1980.

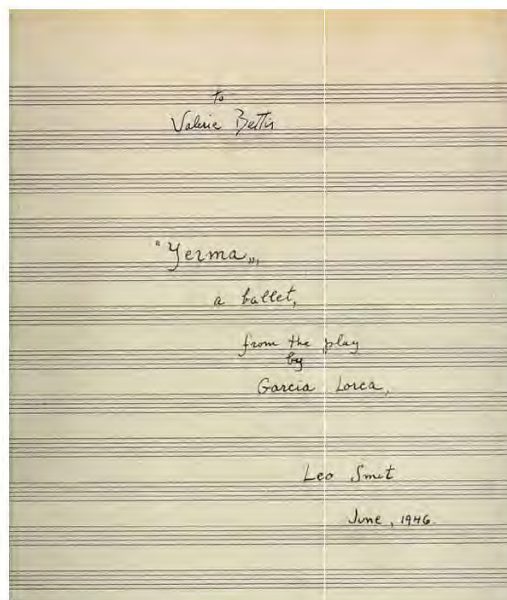


Flyer for an exhibit of Leo Smit's photographs of Rome at the Opus 5 Art Studio, Solana Beach, Calif., January 1980

Leo Smit: Composer, Arranger, Editor

Leo Smit began studying composition in 1935 with Nicolas Nabokov in New York City. His first original composition, written in 1935, was a song entitled *Zvay*. Smit's compositional output eventually included three symphonies, an opera and a chamber opera, two ballets, a piano concerto, more than ninety songs, and numerous chamber, choral, and piano works.

Leo Smit's early experience as rehearsal pianist for George Balanchine provided him knowledge of ballet that he put to use in the composition of the music for two ballets: *Yerma* (1946) and *Virginia Sampler* (1947, revised in 1960). Both works were choreographed by Valerie Bettis (1919-1982), who had formed her own dance company in 1944. *Yerma* was choreographed for Bettis' dance company, while *Virginia Sampler* was choreographed for the Ballets Russe de Monte Carlo.



Yerma

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the piece "Yerma". The score is written on multiple staves, including vocal lines and piano accompaniment. It features various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like "ff" and "p". The title "Yerma" is written at the top center in a cursive hand. There are also some handwritten annotations and a signature "Leo Smit" in the upper right corner.

In 1988 Leo Smit purchased an edition of the complete poems of Emily Dickinson from a bookstore in Old Sturbridge, Massachusetts. He had been familiar with some of the poems before, having performed Aaron Copland's *Twelve poems of Emily Dickinson*, but had never truly studied them. In Dickinson's poems he felt he had discovered "a soulmate who answered my emotional needs and stimulated my musical desires." The poems stirred Smit's compositional creativity to the extent that he began setting her poems to music within a month after purchasing the

collection. In the next three years he composed six song cycles to almost eighty of her texts: *Child Emilie*, *The Celestial Thrush*, *The Marigold Heart*, *Beyond Circumference*, *Tinted Mountains*, and *The White Diadem*. He collectively titled the cycles *The Ecstatic Pilgrimage*.

The Celestial Thrush (1988)

a cycle of twelve songs
about
music and birds

for
Soprano and piano

Poems: Emily Dickinson

Music: Leo Smit

Leo Smit © Triskley Music
1988

10. I was = Phonic

Handwritten musical notation for the first system, featuring a treble clef and a vocal line with lyrics. The lyrics are: "I was = Phonic".

Handwritten musical notation for the second system, featuring a bass clef and a piano accompaniment line with lyrics. The lyrics are: "I was = Phonic".

Handwritten musical notation for the third system, featuring a treble clef and a vocal line with lyrics. The lyrics are: "I was = Phonic".

Handwritten musical notation for the fourth system, featuring a bass clef and a piano accompaniment line with lyrics. The lyrics are: "I was = Phonic".

Handwritten musical notation for the fifth system, featuring a treble clef and a vocal line with lyrics. The lyrics are: "I was = Phonic".

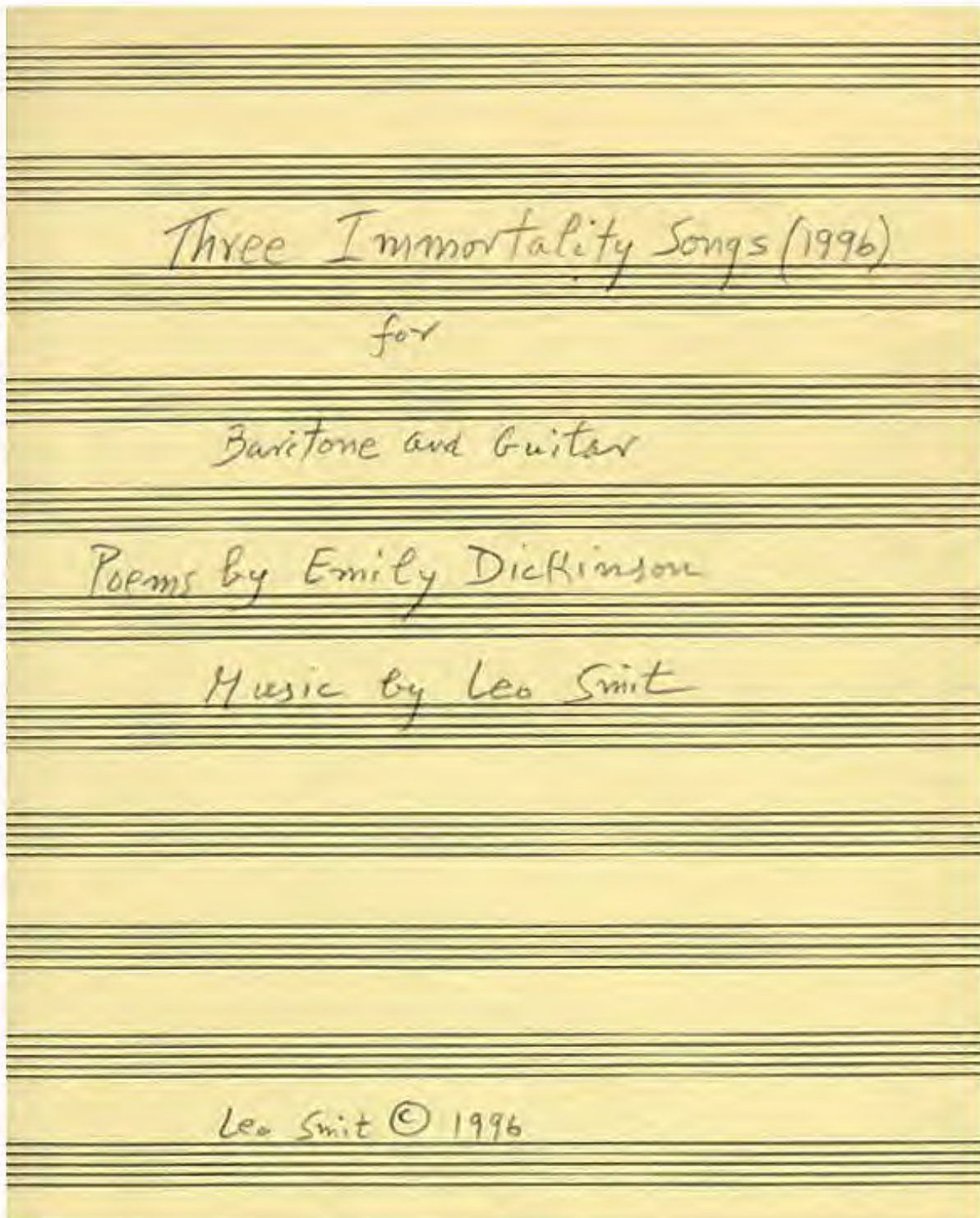
Handwritten musical notation for the sixth system, featuring a bass clef and a piano accompaniment line with lyrics. The lyrics are: "I was = Phonic".

Smit said of his compositional involvement with Dickinson's texts:

I believe I was composing the music without first hearing the tones, led on by the rhythms and the stirring sounds and meaning of Dickinson's poems. Her words created my song cycles, which, in turn, helped me understand her poems, her premonitions of immortality.

A collection of thirty-three of these songs was recorded in June of 1997 by Smit and soprano, Rosalind Rees, for Bridge Records (Bridge 9080).

In 1996 Smit added to his collection of Emily Dickinson songs with *Three Immortality Songs*, for baritone and guitar. It was composed in memory of mezzo-soprano Jan De Gaetani, who was renowned for her performances of contemporary music, and with whom Smit had made a recording of Cole Porter songs in 1977.



In memory of Jan De Gaetane
That such have died enable Us

The image shows a handwritten musical score on aged paper. It consists of two staves: a vocal line and a guitar line. The vocal line is written in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are written below the notes. The guitar line is written in a bass clef with a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'mp' (mezzo-piano) and 'mf' (mezzo-forte), and various musical notations including notes, rests, and slurs. The lyrics are: 'That such have died enable Us the Tranquiller To die That such have lived cer-tificate for Immor-ta - Pi - ty.'

In addition to composing, Leo Smit also arranged and edited several works. Among the works that Smit arranged: Mendelssohn's *Prelude and Fugue No. 5 in F Minor*, arranged for small ensemble (1974), Robert Schumann's *Romances for oboe and orchestra, op. 94*, arranged for two flutes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, and strings (1977), three piano works by Edward MacDowell arranged for oboe and piano, Mozart's *Quintet for Piano and Winds, K. 452*, arranged for piano and saxophone quartet, and four movements from Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*, arranged for solo piano (1968).

Four Movements from "West Side Story"

1

Jets

Leonard Bernstein

Arranged for piano solo by Leo Smit

Allegro moderato $\text{♩} = 129$

Piano *mf marc.*

Finger Snaps

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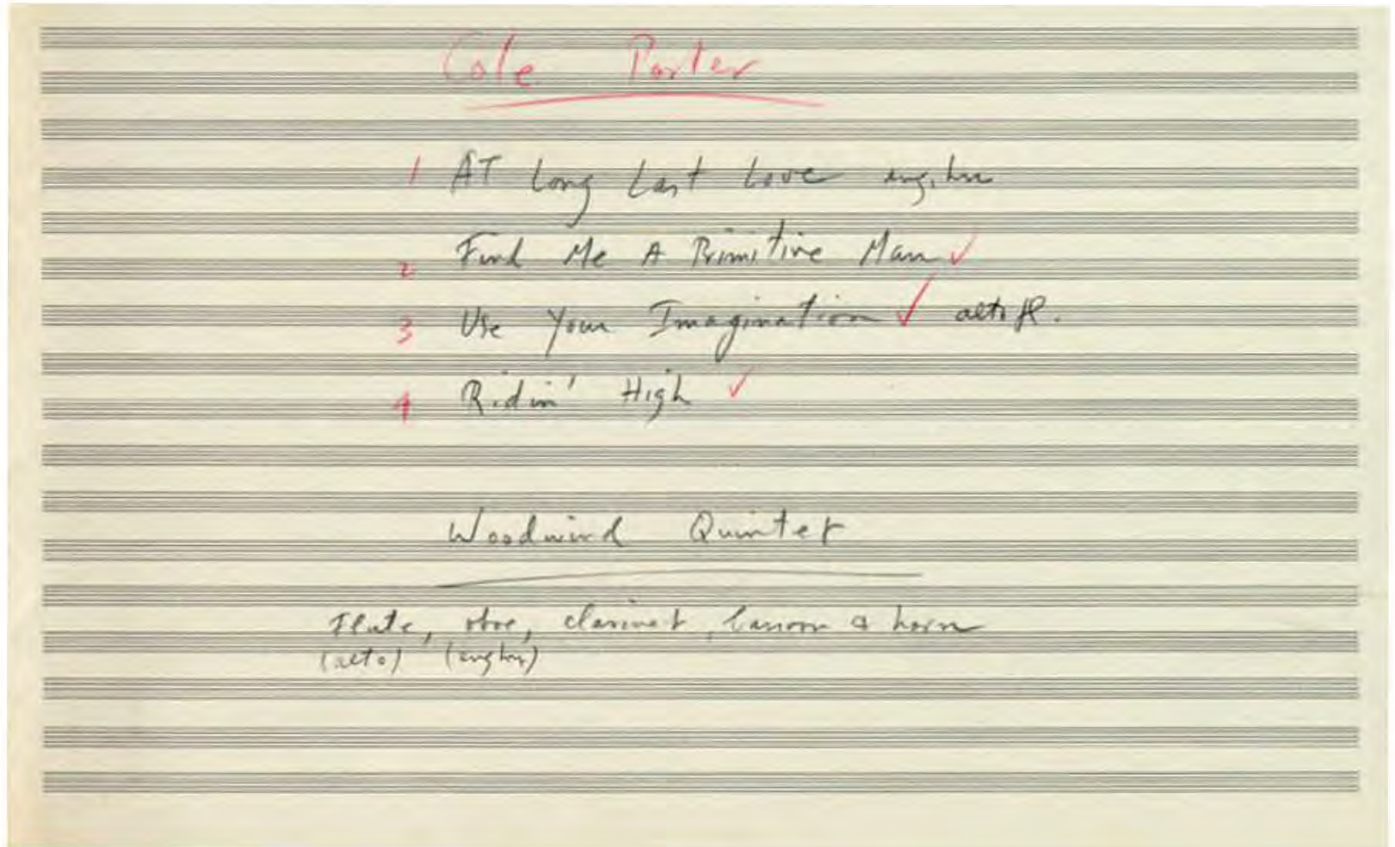
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Smit also arranged several songs by Cole Porter for small chamber ensembles. In 1977 mezzo-soprano Jan De Gaetani and Leo Smit recorded a selection of Cole Porter songs for Columbia Records (M34533), Classic Cole. The program

notes were written by Smit. In them he analyzed several of the songs, making connections between Porter's use of compositional devices and those used by such composers as Bach, Schumann, and Tchaikovsky. He also made the argument that Porter should be regarded more seriously as a composer with statements such as the following:

Porter looked for and found melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic details of common origin in the verses and refrains, thus creating songs that were highly unified in style and form. A study of these relationships reveals Porter as a composer who was consciously aware of the serious problems of musical craft and who, through an inspired gift, was able to conceal the many beautiful solutions from unsuspecting ears while easily charming them.



As an editor of other composer's works, Smit was responsible for creating the two-piano reductions of Leonard Bernstein's *Age of Anxiety* (1950), Dmitri Kabalevsky's *Piano Concerto no. 2* (1946), and Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto no. 2* (1948). He also edited publications of piano music by Aaron Copland (1981) and Dmitri Kabalevsky (1957 and 1958), as well as Irving Fine's *Two Songs from Doña Rosita* (1998).



Works List

The following is a transcription of a handwritten list that Leo Smit gave the Music Library in 1998. The numbering is as it appears on his list.

1. Dance Card: 4 pieces for piano solo, 1985
2. Exequy: for string trio, 1985
3. Tzadik: for piano trio, 1985
4. Canon Super Namen BACH: for string quartet, 1985
5. Czárdás Obstiné: by Liszt; arranged for wind quintet, 1985
6. Tzadik: a. for 12 instruments; b. for string quartet, 1984
7. Toccata: for piano solo, 1984
8. Three MacDowell Pieces: for oboe and piano, 1984
Published by Theodore Presser
9. Madrigal: for flute solo, 1984
10. Tzadik: for saxophone quartet, 1983
11. "things all over": for voice, oboe and piano; for voice and piano, 1983
12. Flute of Wonder: for flute and piano, 1983
13. Quartet for strings, 1938-83
14. Sonata: for cello solo, 1982
15. Farewell: by Liszt; arranged for clarinet (A), accordion, mixed chorus; words by L. Smit, 1977
16. Pater Noster: by Liszt; arranged for male chorus, 1974
17. Variations: for piano and orchestra, 1981
18. Dalaunay Pochoirs: three pieces for cello and piano, 1980
19. Songs of Wonder: for soprano and piano; poems by Beth Frost, 1976
20. Symphony of Dances and Songs: for large orchestra, 1981
21. In Woods: for oboe, harp, percussion, 19??
Published by C. Fischer
22. Symphony no. 2: in six movements, 1965
Published by T. Presser
23. Lizzie in Wonderland: for harp solo, 1974
24. Martha through the Looking-Glass: three pieces for piano solo, 1974
Published by Boosey & Hawkes
25. At the Corner of the Sky: for flute, oboe, men's and boy's choir, narrator; text
North American Indian, J. Rothenberg, 1976
26. Channel Firing: for baritone and piano; poem by Thomas Hardy, 1970

27. *Myopia: a Night*: for tenor, flute, trumpet, trombone, violin, and cello; poem by Robert Lowell, 1971
28. *Sequence*: three poems by T. Roethke for soprano and piano, 1959, rev. 1966
In a Dark Time, In Evening Air, The Sequel
29. *Madrigals, for a Roman Lady*: four poems by Catullus for a cappella mixed chorus (SATB), 1955
30. *Symphony no. 1*: for orchestra, 1955
C. Fischer rental
31. *Magic Water*: opera in one act; libretto by L. Smit after Hawthorne, 1978
32. *The Alchemy of Love*: opera in three acts (space fable); libretto by Fred Hoyle, 1969
33. *Copernicus: Narrative and Credo*: for narrator, mixed chorus and eight instruments and bells; text by Fred Hoyle and L. Smit, 1973
Published by C. Fischer
34. *Academic Graffiti*: quatrains by W. H. Auden for histrionic voice and four instruments, 1962
Published by C. Fischer
35. *A Transient View*: five choral settings for mixed voices; poems by K. Louchheim, 1967
Published by C. Fischer
36. *Banners and Pennants*: for band, 1976
Published by C. Fischer
37. *Seven Characteristic Pieces*: for piano solo, 1949, rev. 1954
Published by Broude Bros.
38. *Variations in G*: for piano solo, 1949
Published by Boosey & Hawkes
39. *Sonata in One Movement*: for piano solo, 1951
Published by T. Presser
40. *Five Pieces for Young People*: for piano solo, 1947
Published by C. Fischer
41. *Trumpeter Swan*: five songs for voice and piano; words by L. Smit, 1985
Published by C. Fischer
42. *Caedmon*: for soprano, tenor, baritone, and orchestra; text by A. Hecht, 1972
C. Fischer rental
43. *A Choir of Starlings*: for solo vocal quartet (SATB) and ten instruments; poems by A. Hecht, 1951
44. *Three Pushkin Romances*: for voice and piano, 1952
45. *Tzvay*: for soprano and piano; poem by Mani Loeb, 1935
46. *ABA*: for clarinet and piano, 1943
47. *Capriccio*: for string orchestra, 1958, rev. 1974
C. Fischer rental
48. *Virginia Sampler*: ballet, 1947, rev. 1960
49. *Yerma*: ballet for Valerie [Bettis]; after F. Garcia-Lorca, 1946

50. Carol: for SSA a cappella chorus; words by St. Godric, 1944?
Published by Peer International
51. Christmas Carol: for SA a cappella chorus; text anonymous, 1943
Published by Peer International
52. Love is a Sickness: for SSAA chorus and piano; poem by Samuel Daniel, 1947
Published by Broude Bros.
53. Psalm: psalms 96 and 98 for mixed chorus (SATB) a cappella, 1944
Published by Peer International
54. Three Christmas Tree Carols: for mixed chorus (SATB) and eight instruments; English translation from the German by L. Smit, 1974
Published by C. Fischer
55. Three Choruses from Copernicus: for mixed chorus (SATB) a cappella; text by Fred Hoyle; Italian madrigal by L. Smit, 1973
56. V'Shum-Roo: for cantor (tenor), mixed chorus (SATB), and organ; text - Exodus 31: Verses 16, 17, Hebrew, 1947
Published by G. Schirmer
57. Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, 1968
C. Fischer rental
58. Four Alchemy Marches: for orchestra; for concert band, 1972
C. Fischer rental
59. Fantasy: the Farewell: for piano solo, 1953
Published by Broude Bros.
60. Rural Elegy: for piano solo, 1948
Published by Boosey & Hawkes
61. Unlike Olympian Jove: for two pianos, four hands, 1970
Note: crossed out on Smit's list
62. Four Motets: for medium voice, two flutes and violin; alternative instrumentation; text, anonymous German; English translation by Sylvia Wright, 1955
Published by Broude Bros.
63. Four Movements from West Side Story: by Leonard Bernstein; arranged for piano solo by L. Smit, 1964
Published by G. Schirmer
64. Danzon Cubano: by Aaron Copland (two pianos); arranged for piano solo by L. Smit, 1949
Published by Boosey & Hawkes
65. Prelude and Fugue in F Minor, op. 35: by Mendelssohn (piano solo); arranged for two violins, two violas, and cello by L. Smit, 19??
66. Finale: Jeu de Cartes: by Igor Stravinsky (orchestra); arranged for piano solo by L. Smit, 1950
67. A Mountain Eulogy: for narrator and piano; also for narrator and orchestra; text from Ibsen's Peer Gynt, 1975
C. Fischer rental
68. Big Foot Ham: by Jelly Roll Morton (piano solo); arranged for string quartet by L. Smit, 1984
69. Love Songs without Words: by Cole Porter (voice and piano); arranged for wind quintet by L. Smit, 1977
C. Fischer rental

70. Cock Robin: for piccolo (flute), voice and percussion; text traditional, 1979
Published by C. Fischer
 71. March for a Beloved General from Virginia Sampler: for orchestra, 1947
C. Fischer rental
 72. Four Last Songs, op. 142: by Robert Schumann (voice and piano); arranged for mezzo-soprano and chamber orchestra by L. Smit, 1977
 73. Three Romances, op. 94: by Robert Schumann (oboe and piano); arranged for oboe and chamber orchestra by L. Smit, 19??
 74. A Foggy Day: by George Gershwin (voice and piano); arranged for piano solo by L. Smit, 1979
 75. Lenten is Come: for mixed voices (A Choir of Starlings); text by A. Hecht, 1951
Published by C. Fischer
 76. A Visitor's Album: three pieces for piano solo, 1974
Published by Boosey & Hawkes
 77. The Dwarf Heart: for mezzo-soprano and piano, 1985? Note: this title replaces The Kiss, noted as being in progress 1985, for solo voice to poems by Anne Sexton
 78. The Celestial Thrush: for soprano and piano; twelve poems by Emily Dickinson, 19?? This is the second of six song cycles that collectively make up The Ecstatic Pilgrimage
 79. The Final Hour: five choruses a cappella to poems by Emily Dickinson
-

Juvenilia

1. Violin Sonata in D Minor (First Movement): by Brahms; arranged for violin and full orchestra, 1934
 2. Piano Concerto in D Minor, K. 466: by Mozart; arranged for piano and string quintet, 1934
 3. Siegfried Idyll: by Wagner; arranged for piano, 4 hands, 1935?
 4. Septet: for woodwinds and brass, 1936
 5. Hebraic Heritage: dances for piano solo, 1938
 6. The Rime of the Ancient Mariner: for reader and piano solo; text by Samuel Coleridge, 1938
-

Known Works Not on Leo Smit's List

1. The Ecstatic Pilgrimage: six song cycles to poems by Emily Dickinson
 - I. Childe Emilie
 1. I was the slightest in the house (poem 486)
 2. Through Lane it lay--through bramble (poem 9)
 3. It troubled me as once I was (poem 600)

4. The Child's faith is new (poem 637)
5. Softened by Time's consummate plush (poem 1738)
6. Papa above! (poem 61)
7. We talked as girls do (poem 586)
8. They shut me up in Prose (poem 613)
9. I cried at Pity--not at Pain (poem 588)
10. Let Us play Yesterday (poem 728)
11. A loss of something ever felt I (poem 959)
12. Good morning--Midnight (poem 425)
13. Up Life's Hill with my little Bundle (poem 1010)
14. I'm ceded--I've stopped being Theirs (poem 508)

II. The Celestial Thrush (See no. 78 in list above)

1. I was a Phoebe--nothing more (poem 1009)
2. The Bird her punctual music brings (poem 1585)
3. The earth has many Keys (poem 1775)
4. The Bobolink is gone (poem 1591)
5. A train went through a burial gate (poem 1761)
6. I cannot dance upon my Toes (poem 326)
7. Upon his Saddle sprung a Bird (poem 1600)
8. Better-than Music!--For I--who heard it (poem 503)
9. Bind me--I still can sing (poem 1005)
10. Within my Garden, rides a Bird (poem 500)
11. Heart, not so heavy as mine (poem 83)
12. I shall keep singing! (poem 250)

III. The Marigold Heart

1. So well that I can live without (poem 456)
2. What shall I do - it whimpers so (poem 186)
3. There came a day at Summer's full (poem 322)
4. My Life had stood - a Loaded Gun (poem 754)
5. Extol thee - could I? (poem 1643)
6. Me prove it now (poem 537)

7. Title divine - is mine! (poem 1072)
8. There is a pain - so utter (poem 599)
9. That first Day, when you praised me Sweet (poem 659)
10. Wild Nights - Wild Nights! (poem 249)
11. Is it too late to touch you, Dear? (poem 1637)
12. I reason, Earth is short (poem 301)
13. A Wife at Daybreak I shall be (poem 461)
14. The face I carry with me - last (poem 336)
15. I have no life but this (poem 1398)

IV. Beyond Circumference

1. The sun kept setting - setting (poem 692)
2. I died for beauty - but was scarce (poem 449)
3. Of course - I prayed (poem 376)
4. T'was the old road - through pain (poem 344)
5. I shall Know why - when Time is over (poem 193)
6. Of Tolling Bell I ask the cause? (poem 947)
7. I Saw no way - The Heavens were stitched (poem 378)
8. I heard a Fly buzz - when I died (poem 465)
9. Go slow, my Soul, to feed thyself (poem 1297)
10. After great pain, a formal feeling comes (poem 341)
11. I've seen a Dying Eye (poem 547)
12. At least to pray is left - is left (poem (502)
13. I went to Heaven (poem 374)
14. The first Day's Night had come (poem 410)
15. We dream - it is good we are dreaming (poem 531)
16. What if I say I shall not wait! (poem 277)
17. That such have died enable Us (poem 1030)
18. Departed - to the Judgment (poem 524)

V. Tinted Mountains

1. The Mountain sat upon the Plain (poem 975)

2. The Angle of a Landscape (poem 375)
3. There's a certain Slant of Light (poem 258)
4. A Light exists in Spring (poem 812)
5. The Mountains stood in Haze (poem 1278)
6. Under the Light, yet under (poem 949)
7. Four Trees - upon a solitary Acre (poem 742)
8. The Fingers of the Light (poem 1000)
9. I see thee better - in the Dark (poem 611)
10. Image of Light, Adieu (poem 1556)

VI. The White Diadem

1. I reckon--when I count at all (poem 569)
2. I dwell in Possibility (poem 657)
3. The Martyr Poets--did not tell (poem 544)
4. The Poets light but Lamps (poem 883)
5. I would not paint--a picture (poem 505)
6. To pile Like Thunder to its close (poem 1247)
7. Me--come! My dazzled face (poem 431)

2. Alabaster Chambers: seven threnodies for string orchestra, 1989
3. Antiphonies: for solo violin; incomplete, 1993
4. Attaca lo scherzo: for piano solo, first draft, 1984
5. Scena Cambiata: for viola, cello and trombone; sketches, 1980
6. *Thomas Jefferson*: a narrative monodrama for baritone and piano, 1988
7. *Three Immortality Songs*: for baritone and guitar; poems by Emily Dickinson, 1996