

Conrad Prebys (1933-2016) was an extremely generous man who made the largest and most important gift to the UC San Diego Music Department that we have ever received, enabling us to build the Conrad Prebys Music Center and Concert Hall. In my conversations with him, he often spoke about how he "loved simple, beautiful music." I've sought to honor his love of beauty and simplicity in this piece, written for a concert dedicated to his memory. I created a set of mini-variations on the Shaker folk song *Simple Gifts* (composed in 1848 and generally attributed to Elder Joseph Brackett) which was famously set by Aaron Copland in 1944. My variations change frequently and unpredictably within the phrases of the song, exploring various aspects of pianism and chromatic transposition. My friend and colleague Aleck Karis gave the premiere performance in La Jolla, California on January 29, 2020 in the Conrad Prebys Concert Hall.

Simple Gifts

Variations for Conrad Prebys

solo piano

Rand Steiger

silently depress these keys
and hold with sostenuto ped.
through m.13

The score is divided into four systems, each with a tempo marking and dynamic instructions:

- System 1 (measures 1-5):** Tempo $\text{♩} = 60$. Dynamics: *p*, *mp*, *mf*. Time signatures: 4/4, 3/4, 5/4, 4/4. Includes a sostenuto ped. instruction.
- System 2 (measures 6-10):** Tempo $\text{♩} = 52$. Dynamics: *p*, *f*. Time signatures: 5/4, 3/4, 5/4, 7/8, 8/8. Includes a sostenuto ped. instruction.
- System 3 (measures 11-15):** Tempo $\text{♩} = 132$. Dynamics: *p* to *f*. Time signatures: 7/8, 3/4, 5/4, 3/4, 3/4, 4/4, 4/4. Includes a sostenuto ped. instruction.
- System 4 (measures 16-20):** Dynamics: *p* to *f*, *mf*, *pp* to *f*. Time signatures: 4/4, 4/4, 3/4, 3/4, 5/4, 5/4. Includes a sostenuto ped. instruction.

♩ = 120

20 *ped.* *f* *ped.* *p* *f*

24 *pp* *f* *p* *mp* *mf*

28 *ped.* *p* *ff*

turn page and continue to hold pedal

42

8^{va}

loco

♩ = 132

catch A with sost. pedal and hold through measure 45

5

5

8^{vb} - - - - -

sost.

Ped.

release sost. ped., A, Bb, and C continue to resonate while turning page, until ped. lift in next bar

59

ff

Ped.

f

Ped. hold until end of measure 63

62

ff

Ped.

rit. ♩ = 100

66

mf

Ped. hold pedal until lift indication in m.81

70

ff

rit. *poco* *a* *poco* $\bullet = 20$

78

p

$\bullet = 48$

81

p

* Red.

Musical score for measures 85-90. The score is written for piano in G major. Measure 85 starts with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The right hand has a quarter rest followed by a dotted quarter note G4. The left hand has a quarter rest followed by a dotted quarter note Bb3. Measure 86: RH has a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. LH has a quarter note Bb3, a quarter note C4, and a quarter note D4. Measure 87: RH has a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. LH has a quarter note Bb3, a quarter note C4, and a quarter note D4. Measure 88: RH has a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. LH has a quarter note Bb3, a quarter note C4, and a quarter note D4. Measure 89: RH has a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. LH has a quarter note Bb3, a quarter note C4, and a quarter note D4. Measure 90: RH has a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. LH has a quarter note Bb3, a quarter note C4, and a quarter note D4. Dynamics include *pp* and *ppp*. A box contains the text "hold pedal through the last measure".

Musical score for measure 90. The score is written for piano in G major. The right hand has a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The left hand has a quarter note Bb3, a quarter note C4, and a quarter note D4. A box contains the text "wait for resonance to fade to silence".

Fine
5.10.19.11.19.29.13