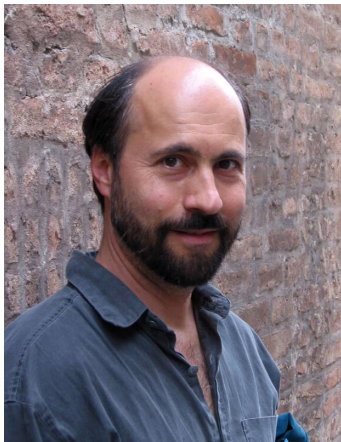


David Erskine in Concert

*March 25, 2010
Loma Colorado Main Library Auditorium
Rio Rancho, New Mexico*



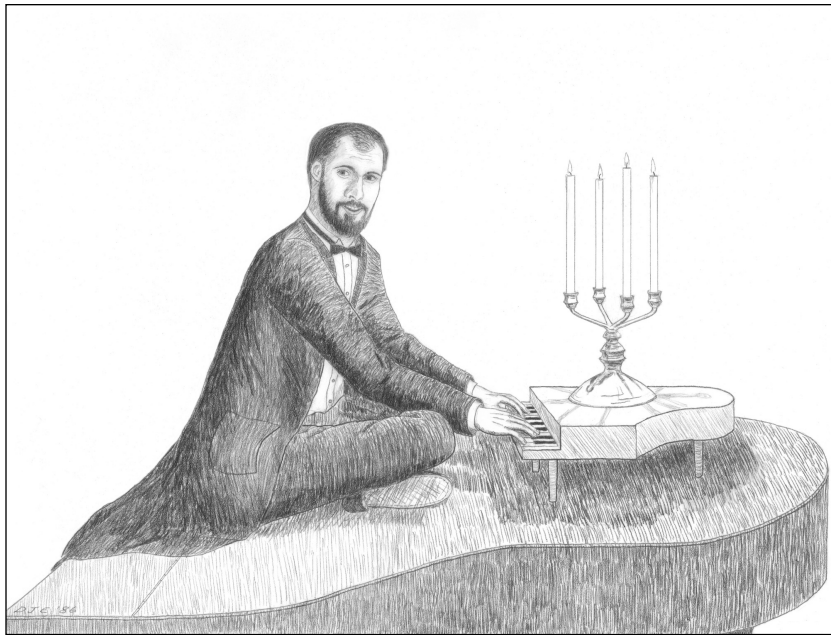
About the Performer

David J. Erskine

Dave has been composing piano music since the third grade, and is mostly self-taught. His music is romantic, impressionistic, emphasizing interesting melodies and their development, and played with a vivid emotional style. He was influenced by the great romantic composers of the 19th century, Chopin, Rachmaninoff and others. He has composed and performed many pieces celebrating the weddings of friends and family. He is also an avid photographer and artist, and some of his music is accompanied by his drawings of Nature (some examples in program). Many of his pieces tell a story or are inspired by scenes from Nature.

Dave composes for the love of music and earns his living by others means. Professionally he is a creative scientist and inventor in the field of optics at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. He loves discovering a better way to measure or observe something. In 1997 he invented a new type of inexpensive instrument to detect the presence of an exoplanet around a star by measuring the small Doppler shift wobble in the star's spectrum. His invention (Externally Dispersed Interferometry) is now being tested at the 5-meter telescope at Mt. Palomar Observatory.

His diverse interests and skills are perhaps the result from dual influences of his parents and grandparents-- both his mother and grandmother were accomplished artists, and his father and grandfather were a scientist and engineer. Dave grew up in the Chicago area, attended University of Illinois and Cornell University studying physics. In 1984 he relocated to the San Francisco Bay area in California, where his musical side blossomed, inspired by his frequent hikes through the lovely mountains and forests of this area.



Dave's CD's "Expressions", "Self-Portrait" & "Sierra Passage" are at www.cdbaby.com/cd/daviderskine1
Further info at his music and art site www.pineshadow.com

Tonight's Repertoire

1. River Borne from Mountain's Tears
2. Field of Flowers
3. Come Walk With Me
4. Butterflies
5. Fantasy
6. Welcome Evelyne
7. Valentine
8. Under Quiet Trees We Join Hands
9. Illini
10. Happy Birthday Linda
11. Dark Forest
12. White Stallion
13. Summer Night's Breeze
14. I Promise You



Notes

1. River Borne of Mountain's Tears

A short exuberant piece painting the cascade of water in spritely rhythmic chords. The rapid, flighty, broken chords are water bounding down the mountain, beginning as dripping trickles, growing into playful splash of stream, and concluding as a windblown waterfall. This is movement #6 of the *Sierra Passage* suite. See accompanying drawing and poem on page 4, also by the composer's hand.

2. A Field of Flowers

In this dream-like piece arpeggiated notes pointillistically create a wash of tone, like the dots of color in an impressionistic painting by Seurat. Each of three movements begins and ends in quiet places, but journeys elsewhere in between. The piece was originally intended as a 30-second ditty for my answering machine, but it sprouted arms and legs and grew.

The beginning of the second movement was inspired by friend Sue Houfek's account of how conductor Zubin Mehta, at an evening outdoor concert in Rome just before beginning "E lucevan le stelle", glanced up at the glittering night sky. I love the thought of that moment. This movement begins delicately in the high register in reverence to the stars, but soon descends to warmer tones and evolves into what feels like a journey down a river. The third movement has the feeling of resurrection and resolution. Composition began May, 1991, with a provisional title "Starry Night". By June, Amy Dunn said she heard in it a field of flowers, and water. The new title "A Field of Flowers" fitted both the pointillistic and peaceful portions of the music. By Halloween of 1991 it was finished.

Drawing and poem for *River Borne of Mountain's Tears*
(Movement 6 of *Sierra Passage*)

Near the summit, up a gully we hike,
with the Sun beating down incessantly
and the sky blue as black.
Our boots slip and slide in the slush—
the snow is yielding to the Sun.
The Sun beats down.

Out from under patches of snow
run trickles of water,
running together.
Run—
run down
opposite the way we climb,
run toward the trees far below.
Leave the rocks.

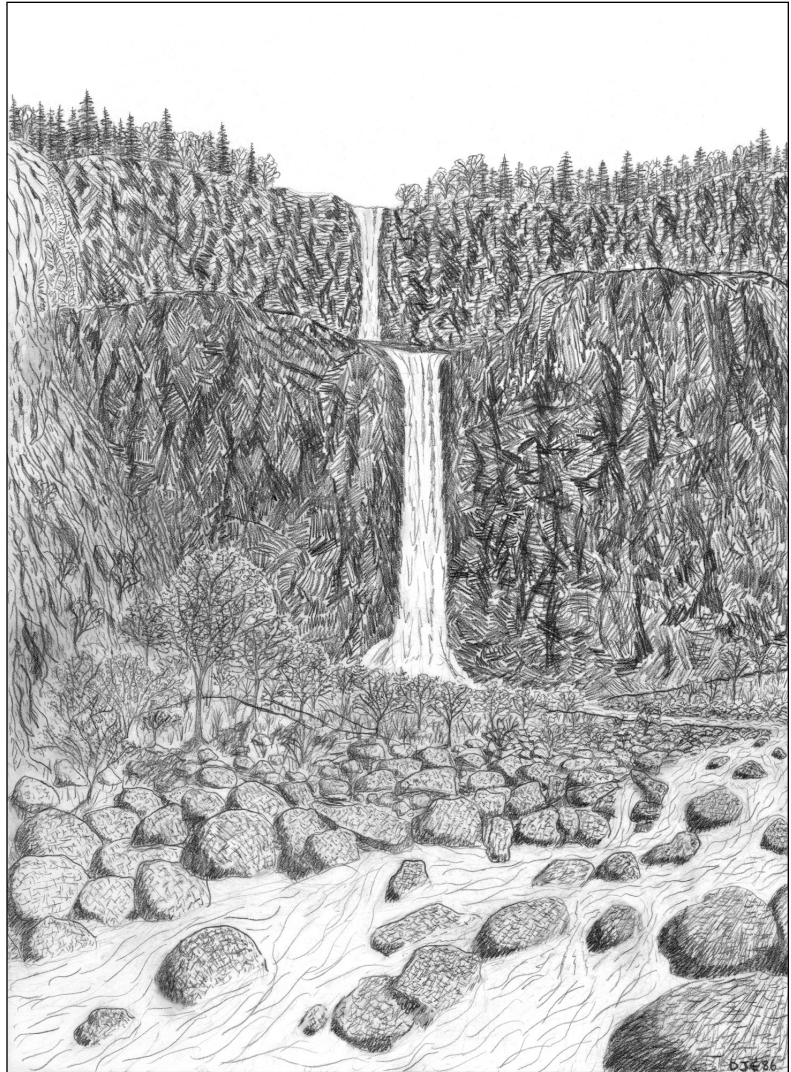
The gullies join hands.
The water meets its own kind.
A stream is woven from many strands
bounding down the Mountain.
Into the trees!
green, to feed
no time for that
in a rush to the Sea.

Through the forest past a hiker
knelt in dappled shadows.
Swirl and dodge his seeking cup,
stop me not!
Ricochet
from rock to rock.

Tumble
down the bouldered channels,
play with splash
in new-found freedom.
Currents join to augment its breadth,
chuckles turn to laughs to hollers of a
River Raging!

The torrent flies into the air
roaring with delight
as a thousand cameras click.
The droplets part, dance with the air in
twisting sheets—
a windblown veil draped to the canyon
bottom.
From the moss-covered rocks the spray
collects its own
and renews its surge to the Sea.

To the Sea,
to the Sea,
forever from the Mountains to the Sea.



3. *Come Walk With Me*

Composed in the spring of 1977 while I was in college. Originally it was the middle section of a larger, now-forgotten piece. My sister Terrie liked this piece and always requested me to play it; so I remembered it because of her. At the time it was unusual for me because it had a slow tempo, while my other compositions were usually much more frenetic (such as pieces 4, 7, 9, 10).

4. *Butterflies*

Composed April 1992, this piece is a duet between the left and right hands. I picture a summer garden where two butterflies flutter about each other as they hop from plant to plant. This description also aptly describes the

bubbly personality of a young daughter (Nona) of a friend. Upon learning of her first piano lesson, I thought it would be fun to mark the occasion by sending her a card with written music. So I set out to compose a short ditty, with the constraints that I would only use the white keys and one finger from each hand. But the ditty grew into a full fledged piece that was more difficult to play than I had intended for her. But it described her personality so well that I was quite pleased with the result.

5. *Fantasy*

This moody piece is characterized by pervasive right hand octave tremolos. This piece began 1989 as the 2nd half of a longer piece of the same name. But soon I separated this section from the mother piece because the total length felt unwieldy, and this section's personality was too different, and it was simply more fun to play as a stand-alone piece. I have a fond memory of playing this piece for a piano teacher, and he became excited and pasted a gold star sticker on the music because he liked the meandering quality of the right hand in the introduction. It had been years since I had received a gold star for anything, so it was a fun occasion.

6. *Welcome Evelynne*

A piece celebrating my brother Paul's second bride Evelynne, September 2007. Based on a ditty I revived from January, 1996. In the actual wedding performance, outdoors with a beautiful view of San Francisco, I arranged it for piano and trumpet, with my step brother Rick playing the trumpet. This marriage appears to be much happier than his first one (see piece # 14 for his first wedding).

7. *Valentine*

This is a cheerful valentine I wrote for someone who caught my eye in the spring of 1985. She loved the musical gift . . . but only the gift.

8. *Under Quiet Trees We Join Hands*

This is a perky wedding serenade composed during the summer 1990 for my friends Carol Ormond and Gene Noland. There are spots where I pictured Carol and Gene in the roles of right and left hands.

9. *Illini*

Composed circa 1978 when I was in college. I remember working as a student waiter in the Illini Union building (Univ. of Illinois) while inventing this piece, which probably began as a something I whistled. while washing the dishes.

10. *Happy Birthday Linda*

Composed for the birthday of my girlfriend's mom in 1985. I mailed the sheet music to her family, and they said she enjoyed it quiet a bit. Its origin was a tune from 1983 that I used to whistle, while picturing it being played on a calliope.

11. *Dark Forest*

A moody piece composed in the late 1990s. My mind follows a creek illuminated by dappled light meandering through a forest. This is another piece with a zillion tiny notes played like the pointillistic dots of a Seurat painting, but this piece is more energetic than #2, and technically more challenging to play correctly, which also makes it more exciting for me when I occasionally get it right. The playing challenge is the left hand that constantly crosses over the right hand to carry the melody, and often to do chromatic runs on the right side, while still working its responsibility on the left side to supply background sound dots.

12. *White Stallion*

The name comes from the mental image I held while composing the piece— a vast western range dotted with horses, under a brooding November sky. A characteristic of the piece is the dialog between the noodling ornaments in the left and right hands, with the right hand representing the stallion. Composition began in 1989 and ended in 1993.

Another drawing and poem from suite: *Sierra Passage*
(Not performed tonight due to it's length, but the drawing is one of Dave's favorites)

Timeless
gentle giants
the tree, the Sequoia.

Wait here
for a thousand years!
Ha! A joke?
They live twice as long.

Raise your eyes
touch its bark
in their shadow
stand belittled,
a mote.

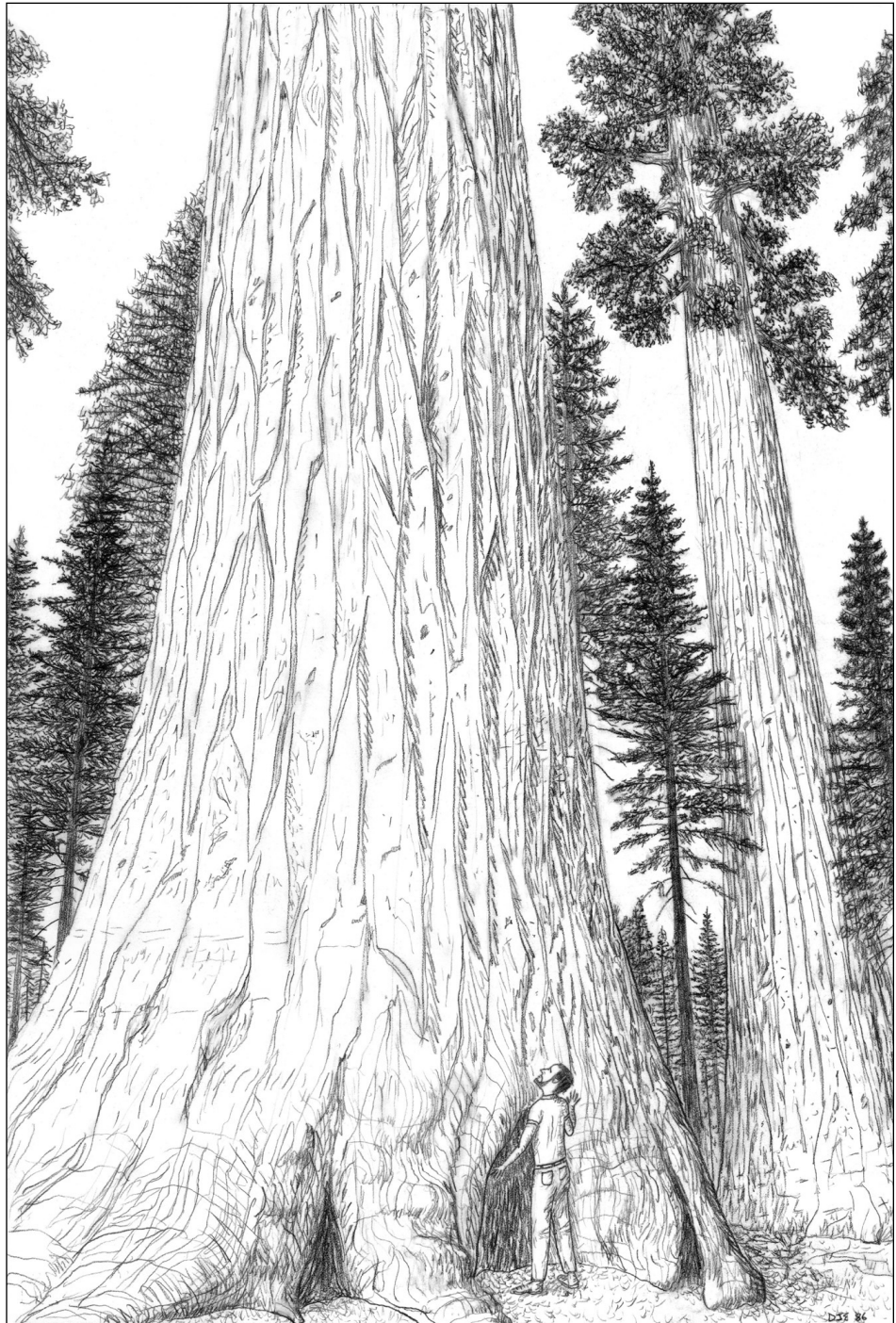
Oh ancient one,
what have you seen
in your centuries?
Silent witness,
traveller from the past,
you have endured
when others fell.

Grandfather,
show me your scars.
A year is just a fleeting beat,
you measure time by the
cataclysm.
FIRE!
Raging tempest of searing
heat.
Cruel death!
to those of blood, and lesser
wood.
You wince, but you remain.

Sweet
sings the peace
of the interlude . . .

The rhythm of your life
is like the cadence of the
surf-
crash of angry foam,
gentle repose between.
Wash away!
those that cannot stand.

Who remains? for the future
but the tree,
the Sequoia!



13. *Summer Night's Breeze*

A characteristic of this piece is the thumb sliding down off a black key to the next lower white key, usually in a four or five-note group. This slide-finger motif is found in the rapid, blurry opening chords of the piece (too quickly for your ear to discern), and represents the warm evening wind. But this slide-fingering can be heard more distinctly in the very last section where the tempo is slow, leading through a progression of interesting chords, gradually accelerating to a crescendo to restate the introductory chords of the piece. Exploring this slide-finger movement generated this piece. Composition began spring 1990 and finished in time for an Autumn recital that year.

14. *I Promise You*

The theme just popped out one day while I was whistling, the day before my brother Paul visited me in the spring of 1993. I knew immediately it could be a memorable melody, so I ran to the piano before I could forget it. By the next day I composed the middle section, and the piece was largely finished in two days, which was unusually quick for me. I dedicated the piece to his upcoming wedding to his first wife Jill, and he used it in the wedding videos. This became a problem when he divorced, as now I worry that I can never play the piece without reminding him of his unhappy first marriage. So this piece rarely sees the light of day. But he's not here tonight, so . . .

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