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# Curtis Otto Bismarck Curtis-Smith

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CURTIS OTTO BISMARCK CURTIS-SMITH

by

Hollis Claire Wittman

A thesis submitted to the Graduate College  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts  
School of Music  
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the winter of 2018, I began working in the Rare Book Room and Special Collections at Waldo Library, Western Michigan University's main library. Several months into my employment, my supervisor, Dr. Susan Steuer, approached me with a new project: the C. Curtis-Smith Collection. The work would be a collaboration between the Rare Book Room and the Western Michigan University Archives, where the collection is currently housed. Curtis Otto Bismarck Curtis-Smith was a member of the faculty in WMU's School of Music for over forty years, teaching piano, composition, and musicology. He passed away in 2014 and donated his personal effects to the University History collection. The sixty-eight boxes in the collection stood mostly untouched between 2014 and 2018; a very general inventory had been done, but the collection required the attention of someone with both archival and musical training. I fit the bill.

As I went through the collection, removing countless staples, paper clips, and spiral bindings, I felt like I grew to know Curtis-Smith. Handling his handwritten scores, reading his correspondence, and even just looking at the types of things he chose to save told me about who he was as a person, a performer, and a composer. I began to look for information about him and found to my great surprise that there is very little available. There are brief biographies, usually associated with performances of his compositions, and a handful of scholarly essays discussing his music. Nothing gave me the depth of knowledge I was looking for.

I am working toward a Master of Arts in musicology, with the intention to pursue library science after the completion of the current degree. Archiving, in particular, holds a fascination for me; the preservation of information and the availability of that knowledge into the future is infinitely compelling work. With Curtis-Smith's collection at my disposal, I determined that I would write his bio-bibliography as my thesis. It constitutes a perfect convergence of my

interests.

The research represented by this document is rooted in the C. Curtis-Smith Collection housed at the Zhang. It cannot claim to be comprehensive, but hopes to encompass most major references to Curtis-Smith, including both scholarly and media sources. As Curtis-Smith retired from the ranks of faculty at WMU only eight years prior to this writing, many of his friends and colleagues have been willing to discuss the composer; some of their thoughts on his life will be incorporated.

The work begins with a brief biography of the composer, followed by a list of his compositions. This annotated list contains any available information about the piece deemed relevant; for example, details of the premiere, commercially available recordings, or re-releases or edits to an existing piece. Performances subsequent to the premiere will be included when information is available and relevant.

The bibliography portion of this work, also annotated, is divided into sections based on the type of item being discussed. The category, “Theses, Dissertations, and Book Chapters,” includes the named materials as well entries in encyclopedias and other reference works. “Reviews of Performances and Recordings” contains newspaper articles, reviews in magazines, and other informal media. “Articles in Music Journals” includes academic periodicals, while “Correspondence and Unpublished Media” cites letters, notes, and documents found primarily in the C. Curtis-Smith Collection at the WMU Archive. “Recordings” provides a list of professional and personal recordings of Curtis-Smith’s work. A list of the composer’s awards can be found in Appendix A.

I’d like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supported me during my journey through this project, and everyone who gave their time and energy to helping me succeed.

Foremost is my committee chair, Dr. Maria Cristina Fava, who supplied exceptional guidance, endless encouragement, and boundless patience through my rampant spelling errors and poor communication. Mike Duffy and Lori Sims, the remainder of my committee, gave me excellent suggestions and met setbacks with equanimity and grace. I'm grateful to my family for their unconditional support and reminders to eat regularly, and to my friends for the coffeeshop work parties and commiseration. I'm also thankful to everyone who gave their input about the project; I never met Curtis-Smith, but WMU is saturated in his memory. Everyone who spoke to me of him, even in passing, contributed to the picture I am attempting to recreate. Of particular help were those who consented to interviews, both on and off the record; your trust allowed me to truly see Curtis-Smith as a human being, beautiful and flawed as the rest of us.

Curtis-Smith was a widely recognized composer and performer of great merit. His compositions, particularly those for piano, provide a snapshot of the periods in which he composed them; they are recognized both in academia and in the broader public as worthy of acclaim. His extensive performance career brought to life both the pieces he created and those of other composers, from the past and his contemporaries. His innovations influenced the greater musical community, and his patience and dedication to teaching influenced just as strongly the individuals with whom he worked. Curtis-Smith's legacy deserves continuing recognition, and this document hopes to serve as a way to inform musicians and researchers into the future.

## CURTIS OTTO BISMARCK CURTIS-SMITH

Hollis Claire Wittman, M.A.

Western Michigan University, 2019

Curtis Otto Bismarck Curtis-Smith, composer and pianist, spent the majority of his career serving the community at Western Michigan University. His development of the bowed piano technique contributed significantly to the course of music in the late twentieth century; his prolific compositions stand on their own artistic merit. This document attempts to provide a summation of the composer's life, particularly in regard to his compositional activity. The first section, a biography, discusses Curtis-Smith's life and the changes to his compositional style over his lifetime. Next, a catalog of works details the available information about the many pieces written by the composer. Finally, an annotated bibliography examines the literature surrounding the composer and his work during his lifetime and shortly after.

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## BIOGRAPHY

This biography will proceed in chronological fashion, focusing on the aspects of Curtis-Smith's life that affected his performance and composition. After a brief look at the composer's childhood and musical education, most of the narrative will follow his career, most of which took place at Western Michigan University. Several resources were of exceptional value in the compilation of this overview; Robert Thomas Remek's doctoral dissertation on Curtis-Smith's organ works, which included his own biography and an interview with Curtis-Smith himself; the material held in the C. Curtis-Smith Collection at the Western Michigan University archives; and personal interviews with Curtis-Smith's colleagues and close friends.

The composer known as Curtis Curtis-Smith was born Curtis Otto Bismarck Smith on September 9, 1941 in Walla Walla, Washington.<sup>1</sup> His father, Otto Bismarck Smith, died three months before the composer's birth. Otto had made his living first operating a general store in Waitsburg, Washington with his brother Miles, and later as the County Clerk at the Court House in Walla Walla. The composer's mother, Mary Feigner, was Otto's second wife, and 27 years his junior. Mary was nearly the same age as Margaret, Otto's daughter from a previous marriage, who left the home before Curtis-Smith's birth. The siblings met in person only in 1960, but in spite of this physical distance, Margaret was a consistent presence in Curtis-Smith's life, sending gifts and letters over the course of his childhood.

After her husband's death, Mary moved in with her own mother, also a widow, and the two women raised Curtis-Smith together. Known to the composer as "Grossmutter," German for Grandmother, Anna Feigner immigrated to the United States in 1898. Grossmutter refused to

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1. Unless otherwise noted, biographical details are taken from Robert Thomas Remek, "A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith," Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002.

speak English unless it was entirely unavoidable, claiming that English was too ugly; as a result, Curtis-Smith's first words were in German. He learned English later in childhood from the neighborhood children and at school. As a part of a small contingent of ethnic German emigres in the area, Anna led the family in attendance at a local German Seventh Day Adventist church. It was here that Curtis-Smith first tasted public performance, though not initially in a musical sense; he began by reciting memorized verses for the congregation.

Mary demonstrated musicianship to Curtis-Smith from early in his childhood, as she played piano for hymn sings and sang in the church choir. The composer's first round of formal musical education began when he was six, with piano lessons from Mrs. Mitzelfeldt, a local woman. He did not much care for these lessons and lasted only a few months, practicing under the careful supervision of his grandmother; she was not a musician herself, but she had a good ear and listened to (and chastised) Curtis-Smith attentively.

Curtis-Smith took up piano again at the age of ten- he wanted to learn one specific piece, *Dreamland*, but found that the piece's difficulty surpassed his abilities. He contacted the local Seventh Day Adventist school, Walla Walla College, and they paired him with Sterling K. Gernet for private piano lessons. As he grew as a musician, Curtis-Smith found outlet for his desire to perform at the family's church; he presented "specials" during services, replacing the verbal recitations of his youth.

Early in his teenage years, Curtis-Smith began to diversify musically. He took organ lessons for two years, beginning at age thirteen, and began to compose; he dates his first compositions to around age twelve. Gernet, who specialized in preparing students for performance careers, met these efforts with indifference. At fourteen, Curtis-Smith began studying with John Ringgold; Ringgold was at that time considered the prime piano teacher at

Whitman College, a local liberal arts college located in Walla Walla. Curtis-Smith credits Ringgold with totally overhauling his performance technique; additionally, unlike Gernet, Ringgold actively encouraged Curtis-Smith to compose. Curtis-Smith studied with Ringgold until Ringgold left for the University of Washington in Seattle in 1958.

After Ringgold's departure, Curtis-Smith studied with David Burge, who had just returned from a Fulbright Fellowship in Milan; their time together encompassed Curtis-Smith's last two years of high school (from which he graduated in 1960)<sup>2</sup> and the following two years further while he attended Whitman College. Burge was already known as a champion of new music, and his lessons with Curtis-Smith encouraged investment in new compositions as well as in the standards of the repertoire. Curtis-Smith's association with him would continue until Burge's death in 2013. Though Burge was his primary musical influence, building on his performance focus, the education provided at Whitman gave Curtis-Smith other opportunities. In an interview with Robert Remek, the composer cited also the influence of William Bailey, one of his theory professors who had studied composition and theory with Arnold Schoenberg in Los Angeles before teaching at Whitman. Curtis-Smith, who took one class with him—second year harmony and ear training—“credits Bailey with teaching him more about traditional and extended harmonic concepts than anyone with whom he studied later.”<sup>3</sup> Curtis-Smith did well academically at Whitman, making the Dean's list during the fall semester of 1961.<sup>4</sup>

In 1962, Curtis-Smith realized one of his dreams (at least according to his friends at the

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2. Anne L. Charnley, “Etcetera,” *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin*, April 28, 1991.

3. Robert Thomas Remek, “A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith,” doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002, 20.

4. Office of the Dean to C. Curtis-Smith, 1961, box 48, C. Curtis-Smith Collection (CCSC), Western Michigan University Archives (WMUA).

time); he transferred from Whitman College to Northwestern University to study with Gui Mombaerts, Burge's former teacher.<sup>5</sup> Mombaerts was primarily known for preparing students for piano performance competitions, and Curtis-Smith's lifetime of award-winning performances attests to his efficacy in this regard. He was inducted into Pi Kappa Lambda<sup>6</sup> in June of 1964 and completed his Bachelor of Music in Piano, with distinction, the same year.<sup>7</sup> He received his Master of Music in 1965.<sup>8</sup>

In the fall of 1965, Curtis-Smith began doctoral work at the University of Illinois, studying composition under Kenneth Gaburo as well as attending seminars with Herbert Brün and Salvatore Martirano. Gaburo's influence on Curtis-Smith shaped much of the younger composer's early work. Though at that time still at the beginning of his career, Gaburo was a lifelong champion of experimental music; he blurred the line between composer and performer, and often integrated theatricality into his work.<sup>9</sup> Curtis-Smith cites his training from Gaburo as "strictly serial."<sup>10</sup> Curtis-Smith did not complete his doctorate; he left the University of Illinois after one year of study. He later considered pursuing doctoral work at the University of

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5. Multiple correspondents to C. Curtis-Smith, October 19, 1962, box 48, CCSC, WMUA.

6. The chapter of Pi Kappa Lambda at Northwestern, into which Curtis-Smith was inducted, was the founding chapter of the organization.

7. Certificate of Induction, June 2; Diploma, June 13, 1964, box 20, CCSC, WMUA.

8. Diploma, June 12, 1965, box 20, CCSC, WMUA.

9. Nicholas Zurbrugg and Kenneth Gaburo. "Two Interviews With Kenneth Gaburo" in *Perspectives of New Music*. Annandale-on-Hudson, NY: vol. 33 iss. 1-2, Winter-Summer 1995: 17.

10. Remek, Robert Thomas, *A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith*, doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002: 28.

Michigan, but the idea did not come to fruition.<sup>11</sup>

After leaving University of Illinois, the composer was hired as Assistant Professor of Music at Northern State College in Aberdeen, South Dakota for two years, from 1966-1968.<sup>12</sup> His experience at Aberdeen was not entirely positive; he taught private piano lessons as well as composition classes, but he felt that he was overworked and underpaid, especially considering the year of doctoral study he brought to the institution.<sup>13</sup> During this period, he sustained an injury to one of his fingers, but not of adequate significance to stop him from practicing and performing for more than a short period of time.<sup>14</sup> A letter from colleague Louis Crowder implies that the ailment could have been a form of tendonitis.<sup>15</sup> In spite of this, he performed a number of recitals during this time, both at Northern and touring to other universities in South Dakota.<sup>16</sup>

In the fall of 1968, Curtis-Smith began teaching at Western Michigan University (WMU), in an ostensibly temporary position. By early October, WMU offered him the position on a permanent basis.<sup>17</sup> In 1969, his involvement with new music on Western's campus was already evident; in a letter to his mother, he describes his administrative involvement with a "3 Days of Contemporary Music" event, commenting "the program was very effective and wild, all very

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11. C. Curtis-Smith to Mary F. Smith, October 8, 1968, box 48, CCSC, WMUA.

12. C. Curtis-Smith, Sabbatical Application, September 2000, box 15, CCSC, WMUA.

13. C. Curtis-Smith to Mary F. Smith, February 1, 1967, box 48, CCSC, WMUA; C. Curtis-Smith, Curtis to Mary F. Smith, April 2, 1967, box 48, CCSC, WMUA.

14. C. Curtis-Smith to Mary F. Smith, April 2, 1967, box 48, CCSC, WMUA.

15. Louis L. Crowder to C. Curtis-Smith, March 18, 1966, box 20, CCSC, WMUA.

16. C. Curtis-Smith, programs, box 19, CCSC, WMUA.

17. C. Curtis-Smith to Mary F. Smith, October 8, 1968, box 48, CCSC, WMUA.

contemporary, and you probably wouldn't have liked it too much."<sup>18</sup> That summer, he was obliged to turn down a summer position at Andrews University, as he was kept busy teaching summer classes at Western.<sup>19</sup> Eventually, Curtis-Smith would teach piano, composition, analysis, and History of American Music at WMU, though not simultaneously.<sup>20</sup>

As he hit his compositional stride moving into the 1970s, Curtis-Smith focused primarily on chamber music; he utilized this medium to experiment with sound. Remek writes that "in chamber works written in the 1970s, Curtis-Smith displayed a talent for discovering new sonorities and successfully integrating them into his compositions... in *Rhapsodies*, *Unisonics*, *Five Sonorous Inventions*, and *Music for Handbells*, Curtis-Smith may be judged as one of the most original American composers of his generation."<sup>21</sup>

The early 1970s brought experimentation with electronics. Letters from the composer to his mother in 1971 recount his work on "electronic music compositions" at the end of that academic year, and his demonstration of a Moog Synthesizer to a group of students outside the music department.<sup>22</sup> Four of the composer's pieces, dating between 1970 and 1973, are entirely electronic or include electronic components, but his interest was fleeting; electronics do not recur after the fixed media piece *In Summerian Sunshine* of 1973, with the exception of a recorded and replayed soprano vocal part in *Gold Are My Flowers*.

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18. C. Curtis-Smith to Mary F. Smith, April 8, 1969, box 48, CCSC, WMUA.

19. C. Curtis-Smith to Mary F. Smith, April 8, 1969, box 48, CCSC, WMUA.

20. C. Curtis-Smith, professional resume pamphlet, ca. 1981, box 48, CCSC, WMUA.

21. Robert Thomas Remek, "A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith" (doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, 2002), 26-27.

22. C. Curtis-Smith to Mary Feigner, January 19, 1971, box 48; C. Curtis-Smith to Mary Feigner, March 2, 1971, box 48; CCSC, WMUA.

Not all of Curtis-Smith's concerns at the time were musical. The composer asserts in an interview with Robert Thomas Remek in 2002 that he legally changed his name to Curtis Otto Bismarck Curtis-Smith in 1971 to avoid confusion with other composers of the name Curtis Smith, in particular perhaps the one who was writing children's music. He says in the end of his decision, "the name Curtis had been a family name several generations ago. By hyphenating the name, it was again reinstated as a last name."<sup>23</sup> Though the change met with his sister Margaret's approval, perhaps in part because it was her suggestion, not everyone thought the change wise; Richard DePeaux, Curtis-Smith's close friend from the very beginning of his time at Western Michigan University, thought the modification silly.<sup>24</sup> Regardless of the wisdom of the change, the unique name brought Curtis-Smith notoriety throughout his life.

In 1972, Curtis-Smith received the Leonard Bernstein Composition Fellowship, which enabled him to spend the eight-week summer session studying with Bruno Maderna at the Berkshire Music Center in Tanglewood, Massachusetts, an experience valued and mentioned by the composer throughout his career. At the end of the summer, he was awarded the Koussevitzky Prize for his piece *Comédie*, a "semi-theatrical" piece for two soprano vocalists and chamber orchestra, written while at the Institute. Curtis-Smith returned to Tanglewood in an "unofficial" capacity in 1973, studying with Peter Maxwell Davies for four weeks. That summer also brought the Vermont Composers' Conference, at which the composer attended seminars with both Mario Davidowsky and Donald Erb.<sup>25</sup>

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23. C. Curtis-Smith, Sabbatical Report, December 31, 1977, box 15, CCSC, WMUA.

24. Richard DePeaux in conversation with the author, February 25, 2019.

25. C. Curtis-Smith, professional resume pamphlet, ca. 1981, box 25, CCSA, WMUA.

1973 was a big year for Curtis-Smith, as it brought the completion of one of the composer's most famous pieces, *Rhapsodies*. For solo piano, *Rhapsodies* consists of four movements, over the course of which the pianist moves from playing primarily on the keyboard to playing primarily within the piano. David Burge, now in the role of performer rather than teacher, asked the composer to write a piece for him. Knowing of Burge's interest in new music, Curtis-Smith applied his creativity to the interior of the piano, with the aim of trying to use a technique or create a sound that more widely known new music composers like John Cage and Henry Cowell hadn't utilized. He came up with bowed piano, a process he detailed in an interview with Bruce Duffie:

It wasn't that I was trying just to think of something novel just for the sake of novelty, because that in itself is meaningless. You can write bad music even if it's the most original thing right at that moment. But I did wonder if there was anything else one can do just as a technique, and then put it to musical purposes. Just stumbling around, I had an old violin bow there, one that had the horsehair which wasn't even attached anymore to the other end. So I just disassembled the bow and tried it, and lo and behold, it worked... except the horsehairs broke too fast. Then one day I happened to meet my colleague, a violist there at WMU, and I asked him what I should do about this problem. He's a fisherman, so he said, "why don't you try monofilament nylon fishing line? Just go out and buy some fishing line." So I did, and that solved the problem. I just had to make my own bows, loop that around, and tie the ends and so on, and rosin it. That didn't break.<sup>26</sup>

Curtis-Smith's pieces that include bowed piano ask the pianist to thread bows through the strings of specific pitches, which are differentiated by the colors of the bows. The result is an eerie sustained tone, in which the performer has a great deal of control over the nuances of the sound produced. The first piece to utilize the technique was *A Song of the Degrees*, but *Rhapsodies* is the piece that caught the eye of the public. The unusual technique earned Curtis-Smith his share of attention; George Crumb used the technique, and composer Stephen Scott

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26. Bruce Duffie, "Composer C. Curtis-Smith: A Conversation with Bruce Duffie," <http://www.bruceduffie.com/curtis-smith.html> (accessed March 5, 2019).



spent a decade writing almost exclusively for bowed piano.<sup>27</sup> Curtis-Smith himself, however, used the technique in only a handful of pieces before retiring it (with one exception; *Fantasy Pieces*, a decade later, reprises bowed piano in 1987) for fear of, in essence, oversaturating the aural market. In spite of that, *Rhapsodies* cemented the composer's reputation for creativity and experimentalism.

With a few years as a professor at Western Michigan under his belt, by the mid-1970s Curtis-Smith began to feel the necessity for a period of time devoted solely to composition. His application for his first sabbatical leave from Western describes his desire to compose, while finding himself unable to truly focus on composition while also trying to keep up with practicing, performing, and teaching. His work at Western was important to him, but he felt that taking a break to focus on composition would not only boost his compositional portfolio, but also help him as a musician, performer, and teacher. He spoke of how composing improved his ability to understand structure in pieces he performed and to work with the compositions of other artists, and he felt that he was beginning to develop his own voice:

During the past two years, I have sensed the gradual emergence of a new style in my compositions. That is, a style which is less derivative, less imitative of other composers works. In particular, the last four pieces I have written show this emergence of what I believe to be a more original style, and the last piece Winter Pieces written this past summer, shows this most clearly.<sup>28</sup>

Though it seems a direct contradiction to that sentiment, much of the music that earned Curtis-Smith his reputation involved both direct quotation and stylistic allusion; a method that could be seen as derivative, though the composer's own voice was clear throughout. His

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27. Bruce Duffie, "Composer C. Curtis-Smith: A Conversation with Bruce Duffie," <http://www.bruceduffie.com/curtis-smith.html> (accessed March 5, 2019).

28. C. Curtis-Smith, Application for Sabbatical Leave, fragment, box 15, CCSC, WMUA, 5.

argument was compelling, however, and his application for sabbatical was approved; he spent much of the 1975-1976 academic year visiting his mother in Washington (while, of course, composing), to the delight of the supportive community in his hometown.<sup>29</sup>

The leave proved as productive as he hoped, if not more so, though the directions of his creativity were not exactly as he anticipated. He expected to produce five pieces, and in the end he met and exceeded that goal. His first two proposals yielded the expected results; a solo piano piece, *Tristana Variations*, and a solo harp piece, *Three Pieces for Harp*. He also proposed a piece for full orchestra but got no further than sketches- instead, he “substitutes” *Unisonics*, a duet for piano and alto saxophone.<sup>30</sup>

The composer intended the fourth proposed piece to be for retuned piano, or a standard tuning on a piano or other keyboard instrument. This proposal was more than adequately fulfilled; in addition to finishing *Suite in Four Movements*, a harpsichord solo piece for Igor Kipnis, he began sketching *Ensembles/Solos*, which he did not complete until 1977 during his time at the University of Michigan. Written for an eleven-member chamber ensemble, *Ensembles/Solos* employs two pianos, one tuned in 5/7 temperament and one in the more traditional equal temperament, giving the pianist a total of 24 unequal division of each octave. Curtis-Smith says this “approaches this [the proposal] idea in a vague way, at least in terms of an avoidance of equal temperament.”<sup>31</sup>

The fifth proposed piece was to be a composition for brass quintet and electronic tape. This did not materialize; the sketches intended for this project became the 1979 *Plays and Rimes*,

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29. “Ex-resident active composer,” Walla Walla Union Bulletin, December 14, 1975.

30. C. Curtis-Smith, Sabbatical Report, December 31, 1977, box 15, CCSC, WMUA.

31. C. Curtis-Smith, Sabbatical Report, December 31, 1977, box 15, CCSC, WMUA.

for brass quintet and piano written for the Western Brass Quintet. To fulfill the terms of the proposal, Curtis-Smith suggested another composition- *Music for Bells*, a commissioned piece for handbells. He justified the substitution by saying that *Music for Bells* is “contrapuntally comparable [to a brass quintet] in complexity, though not as long in duration as a proper brass quintet.”<sup>32</sup>

During this sabbatical period, Curtis-Smith signed a contract with CRI to record *Unisonics* and *Music for Bells*. The recordings and the release (CRI SD-388) took place in 1978.<sup>33</sup> In addition to recording and composing, Curtis-Smith spent time making arrangements for the publication of various pieces and applying for grants. Letters from Curtis-Smith to his mother early in 1976 record his negotiations with Salabert during that time and his application for a Rockefeller grant, which he received both in 1975 and 1976. He also arranged a performance of (*Bells*) *Belle du Jour* by WMU’s university orchestra, with the composer himself performing at the piano. In order to do so, however, he was forced to turn down an offer (and a paycheck) from the Indianapolis Symphony, who wanted to program the same piece on the same day; Curtis-Smith was somewhat resentful of the obligation to WMU, particularly as he was less than thrilled with the performance of the university orchestra.<sup>34</sup>

At the very end of 1975, halfway through his sabbatical and after a great deal of searching, Curtis-Smith obtained a piano of his own. He spent some time attempting to find a reasonable model in his price range- in the end, he found one for free but paid for repairs to the

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32. C. Curtis-Smith, Sabbatical Report, December 31, 1977, box 15, CCSC, WMUA.

33. C. Curtis-Smith, Sabbatical Report, December 31, 1977, box 15, CCSC, WMUA.

34. C. Curtis-Smith to Mary Feigner, February 16, 1976 and January 21, 1976, box 48, CCSC, WMUA.

action, strings, and keys.<sup>35</sup> A few months into his ownership, he found that the strings needed to be tuned more frequently than he expected, something he hoped would improve as the instrument adjusted to the new strings.<sup>36</sup> This unnamed piano and the difficulties it embodied hinted at Curtis-Smith's almost immediate desire to find another instrument, and his eventual famous purchase of Gatsby, his Steinway, in 1981.

In February of 1976, William Albright, composition professor at University of Michigan, commissioned Curtis-Smith to write a solo organ piece for him, promising both payment and publication.<sup>37</sup> The result was *Masquerades*. Later that year, Curtis-Smith worked with Albright while he served as a Visiting Lecturer at the U of M, where he taught composition.<sup>38</sup> He took a leave of absence from Western immediately after his 1975-1976 sabbatical to take the position, which according to his own account was offered to him without question, credentials, or recommendations. The opportunity to teach at a larger school was compelling, and his duties consisted of exclusively instruction in composition, including private lessons, composition courses, and the coordination of composers' concerts. He was surprised to find himself instructing doctoral students when he did not himself possess a doctoral degree!<sup>39</sup> He admits that one of his favorite classes was a composition class for non-music majors; he found many of the students talented and their ideas fresh and interesting.<sup>40</sup>

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35. C. Curtis-Smith to Mary Feigner, January 7, 1976, box 48, CCSC, WMUA.

36. C. Curtis-Smith to Mary Feigner, February 19, 1976, box 48, CCSC, WMUA.

37. C. Curtis-Smith to Mary Feigner, February 29, 1976, box 48, CCSC, WMUA.

38. C. Curtis-Smith, professional resume pamphlet, ca. 1981, box 25, CCSA, WMUA.

39. C. Curtis-Smith to Mary Feigner, April 8, 1976, box 48, CCSC, WMUA.

40. C. Curtis-Smith to Mary Feigner, November 29, 1976, box 48, CCSC, WMUA.

According to his letters, Curtis-Smith very much enjoyed his experiences at University of Michigan. In a letter from December 1976, he mentions the composition department's desire to keep him at the university and their recommendation to the piano studio that Curtis-Smith be hired into their open position. He recounts the warmth of his relationships with Albright and William Bolcom, with whom he continued to be close with over the rest of his life.<sup>41</sup> In the end, however, Curtis-Smith returned to his position at Western Michigan University, and he was granted full professorship at WMU in 1977.

Before leaving for his sabbatical, Curtis-Smith became acquainted with a piano student, Kathryn (Kathy) McCoy. They corresponded throughout Curtis-Smith's time at the University of Michigan and on July 16, 1977 Curtis-Smith and McCoy were married. McCoy earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees in English from WMU; she is also fluent in French and taught the language at Western in the late 1990s. Remek writes in 2001 about McCoy's influence on Curtis-Smith's life:

Although she has not kept up her piano playing, Curtis-Smith judges her musical instincts to be impeccable to a degree that exceeds many of his professional colleagues. He observes that she has a better musical ear than he has, and is able to remember and sing very accurately long melodies, whether from the symphonic literature or popular song. Curtis-Smith credits her with an unerring appreciation of what is aesthetically superior-whether in music, literature, art, or architecture- not easily fooled by "flashy" display or technical bravado. He relates that, over the nearly twenty-five years they have been married, she has been a consistent "believer" in his compositional endeavors in a way that shows a profound understanding of the art, and that her reactions to musical performances are uncannily similar to his own.<sup>42</sup>

McCoy accompanied Curtis-Smith the next year to Europe; the Guggenheim Foundation awarded the composer a Fellowship in 1978, and he chose to use the funds for inspiration

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41. C. Curtis-Smith to Mary Feigner, November 29, 1976, box 48, CCSC, WMUA.

42. Robert Thomas Remek, "A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith" (doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, 2002), 22-23.

through travel and the pursuit of an environment in which he could focus on composition.

Curtis-Smith still hadn't dispelled his doubts about continuing his career at Western Michigan when he returned from Europe. McCoy recounts in a letter to Curtis-Smith's mother that he was looking for another job, having applied unsuccessfully at West Virginia University, the Eastman School of Music, Bowdoin College in Maine, University of Oregon, University of Illinois, and Harvard by 1979.<sup>43</sup> In most cases, the composer was close to the top of the list of candidates, but was not quite what the institution was looking for. He stayed the course at WMU.

With the wane of the decade, Curtis-Smith's music grew less "experimental" (to use the term broadly) and more quotational in nature; some of his most popular works, like the noteworthy *Great American Symphony (GAS!)* fall into this tradition. The composer credits William Bolcom and William Albright, the "two Bills from [the University of] Michigan"<sup>44</sup> for this development. Keith E. Clifton describes Bolcom's music as broadly accessible and utilizing a more tonal idiom than the serialist composers of the generation before, and he credits Bolcom with being one of the most "distinguished" composers of his generation.<sup>45</sup> Albright's music, described as "polystylistic," "pulling in pop culture references,"<sup>46</sup> pursues similar goals, though of course each composer realizes the concept in their own way. Curtis-Smith's year at University

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43. Kathryn McCoy to Mary Feigner, February 10, 1977; Elliott Schwartz C. Curtis-Smith and vice versa, January 30, 1978; and Peter Bergquist to C. Curtis-Smith and vice versa, 3 April 1978, 28 February 1978, 30 January 1978, 24 January 1978, box 48, CCSC, WMUA; C. Curtis-Smith, Application for Employment, November 29, 1977; and Lusie Vosgerchian to C. Curtis-Smith, March 26, 1979, box 15, CCSC, WMUA.

44. Robert Thomas Remek, "A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith" (doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, 2002), 28.

45. Keith E. Clifton, "'Yes, it's a brilliant tune': Quotation in Contemporary American Art Song," *Journal of Singing*: Jan/Feb 2016; vol. 73 no. 3: 281.

46. Evan Chambers, "In Memoriam William Albright," *Perspectives of New Music*: Winter 1999, 37, 1; 32

of Michigan allowed him to spend ample time with these two composers, connections that he maintained for the duration of his lifetime; their musical influence is evident in Curtis-Smith's compositions. Newspaper reviews of Curtis-Smith's music of this period refer to him as a successor to Ives, incorporating Americana. Remek succinctly describes this process:

In the late 1970s, Curtis-Smith began to introduce vernacular music into his compositions. At the same time, an underlying rhythmic pulse was more readily perceptible in his music, as his rhythmic vocabulary became somewhat simpler. His works were less abstract, and often employed traditional forms. A sense of humor and playfulness also frequently appeared in his evolving musical language.<sup>47</sup>

1979 brought a performance of Curtis-Smith's *Music for Handbells* at the Tanglewood summer institute.<sup>48</sup> Later that year, he was the youngest faculty member (at 38 years old) to date to receive the Distinguished Faculty Scholar award, WMU's highest academic honor.<sup>49</sup>

Very early in the 1980s, Curtis-Smith began pursuing the purchase of an upgraded piano. He fell in love with a refurbished Steinway, but ran into problems with financing; his savings with his wife Kathy McCoy covered part of the cost, but high interest rates made borrowing the remainder of the funds a challenge. Partial funding was provided, eventually, by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, but even with that assistance, a substantial amount remained.<sup>50</sup>

Enter Irving S. Gilmore. A fixture of Kalamazoo society and the founder of the Irving S. Gilmore Foundation, Gilmore made his fortune in a variety of business ventures in the Kalamazoo area. He was a pianist himself and a consistent supporter of the arts throughout his

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47. Robert Thomas Remek, "A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith" (doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, 2002), 27-28.

48. C. Curtis-Smith to Mary Feigner, July 17, 1979, box 48, CCSC, WMUA.

49. Robert Thomas Remek, "A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith" (doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, 2002), 22.

50. C. Curtis-Smith to James M. Reeder, November 26, 1980, box 15, CCSC, WMUA.

lifetime and after; the Gilmore Foundation still supports art and artists in Kalamazoo to this day, including the Irving S. Gilmore International Keyboard Festival.<sup>51</sup> Curtis-Smith approached Gilmore through a mutual friend, requesting a low-interest loan for the remaining \$10,000 he needed to purchase the instrument. Gilmore simply wrote a check and sent the money as a gift to Curtis-Smith, saying simply that he knew Curtis-Smith was a good pianist and implying that his talent was sufficient justification for the gift. Curtis-Smith's thanks came in the form of an invitation to Gilmore to come hear the piano at any time<sup>52</sup>. According to Curtis-Smith, Gilmore was present at a dinner party in October of 1980, where he heard the piano played, but declined to try it himself in front of the small group in attendance.<sup>53</sup> Instead, he came for lunch at a later time and played for just the composer and his wife- Curtis-Smith described him as a "very private, and almost shy individual;" this is evidenced by the fact that his gift to Curtis-Smith came to light only after Gilmore's death.<sup>54</sup>

The piano remained one of Curtis-Smith's prized possessions until the end of his life, becoming almost a member of the family: "Because the exterior of the piano 'had a facelift' in 1920, the composer-at his wife's suggestion-named the piano 'The Great Gatsby.'"<sup>55</sup> *For Gatsby* of 1980 was completed on and dedicated to the new instrument; the third of the four movements illustrates Curtis-Smith's friendship with Bolcom as well as his delight with Gatsby. The

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51. "The Legacy," Irving S. Gilmore Foundation, accessed February 14, 2019, <http://www.isgilmore.org/legacy/>.

52. C. Curtis-Smith to Irving Gilmore, September 16, 1980, box 15, CCSC, WMUA.

53. C. Curtis-Smith to Mary F. Smith, October 15, 1980, box 15, CCSC, WMUA.

54. C. Curtis-Smith to Mary F. Smith, November 30, 1980, box 48, CCSC, WMUA.

55. Peter Luke and Katherine Doud, "GENEROSITY: Ways he cared show up in the ways late Irving Gilmore shared," *Kalamazoo Gazette*, January 1986.



movement incorporates themes based on Kathy McCoy and Bolcom's wife, Joan Morris; Bolcom penned Morris's theme on Gatsby while visiting Curtis-Smith. Bolcom uses both themes in "Knock-stuck" from *Three Dance Portraits*.

The early 1980s brought the height of Curtis-Smith's borrowing and quotation in his music; Remek says that "the use of American vernacular idioms by Curtis-Smith reached its peak in *The Great American Symphony (GAS!)* (1981)," an assertion that is difficult to counter. *GAS!*, as Curtis-Smith always referred to the piece, is one of his better known works, in part for its dizzying array of allusions, direct quotes, and stylistic appropriations.<sup>56</sup> Though he retained his interest in popular styles, after the early 1980s his growing immersion in world music began to eclipse his use of recognizable vernacular.

Mary Feigner, Curtis-Smith's mother, passed away in 1982, after years of struggling with polio<sup>57</sup>. She and Curtis-Smith remained close until her death; he wrote her weekly letters, called when he could, and visited almost yearly. On a more positive note, Curtis-Smith was granted Full Professorship at Western Michigan University the same year.<sup>58</sup>

In 1983, however, Curtis-Smith was again applying for faculty positions at other institutions. Brandeis University received his application, as did Indiana University and the University of Hong Kong.<sup>59</sup> None of these worked out; instead, he applied for sabbatical leave,

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56. Robert Thomas Remek, "A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith" (doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, 2002), 28.

57. Funeral prayer card for Mary Feigner, 1982, box 48, CCSC, WMUA; Richard DePeaux in conversation with the author, February 25, 2019.

58. David Cope and Greg A. Steinke, "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)," *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*, ed. Charles Hiroshi Garrett (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 516.

59. Allan Keiler to C. Curtis-Smith, May 9, 1983; C. Curtis-Smith to William B. Christ. January 23, 1983; Anne Boyd to C. Curtis-Smith, November 11, 1983, box 15, CCSC, WMUA.

which he was granted for the academic year spanning September 1984 to August 1985. The leave was again compositionally productive, as his leaves tended to be. He produced the three works he proposed: a chamber piece (Quintet, for guitar and string quartet), a choral piece (*Alap, Raga Kedar*, for chorus and percussionist), and an orchestral work (*Garlands*). Curtis-Smith's sabbatical request proposed basing each of the three pieces on a different non-Western musical tradition; Indian, Hindustani, and Javanese. Though Curtis-Smith had a strong interest in world music, in part because of the world music classes he taught at Western Michigan University, he usually refrained from using non-Western instruments in his works; he borrowed other elements of cultural music, but was not interested in borrowing instruments from other traditions. [*Alap, Raga Kedar* turned out to be an exception; the percussionist accompanying the choir does use Indian percussion instruments.] Rather, he borrows elements of tradition: for example, the rhythmic structures, or tala, of Indian music in *Quintet*, and the "stratification" concept from Javanese gamelan music employed in *Garlands*.<sup>60</sup>

Part of Curtis-Smith's goal during the sabbatical was to spend time studying Javanese and Indian musical traditions. Though he was unable to study with his preferred teachers, he did take the opportunity to work with sitarist Som Majumdar in Chicago. In his sabbatical report, he described how that experience as well as the rest of his investment in world music during his sabbatical allowed him to teach his class "Non-Western Music" more effectively; but he requested that the school purchase more Indian instruments with which he could teach! By the end of the sabbatical, Theodore Presser (Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania) was considering the publication of *Garlands*.<sup>61</sup>

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60. C. Curtis-Smith, Sabbatical Report, December 21, 1986, box 15, CCSC, WMUA.

61. C. Curtis-Smith, Sabbatical Report, December 21, 1986, box 15, CCSC, WMUA.

In 1986, Curtis-Smith premiered the last three etudes from William Bolcom's *Twelve New Etudes*, a piece which went on to win a Pulitzer Prize. Bolcom himself was dismissive of that fact: "It's better than a kick in the teeth," he said, but "people don't really follow serious music all that assiduously in this country."<sup>62</sup> At the same concert, Curtis-Smith also premiered Bolcom's *Knockstück* from *Three Dance Portraits*; the "portrait" in question was Curtis-Smith's. The event represented the camaraderie between the two composers; *Knockstück* incorporates the same themes for McCoy and Morris that Curtis-Smith used in *For Gatsby*.

In 1987 Curtis-Smith applied for a position at Indiana University, though it is difficult to say whether it was because of unhappiness at Western Michigan University or a desire to be affiliated with the more prestigious program at IU.<sup>63</sup> Whatever the reasoning, the change didn't come; the new decade found Curtis-Smith more involved and busier than ever in WMU and the Kalamazoo community.

An article in the *Kalamazoo Gazette*, highlighting Curtis-Smith's commission for the 1990 Irving S. Gilmore International Keyboard Festival, affirms the composer's busy life. "'It seems like one either has too little or too much to do,' said Curtis-Smith. 'But it's funny, when you have too much to do, it somehow gives you the incentive to get it all done.'"<sup>64</sup> The piece referenced in the article, the piece taking up the majority of Curtis-Smith's time, was the Concerto for Left Hand and Orchestra, written for pianist Leon Fleisher. The piece represented several of the composer's compositional trends, both new and established. The composer's use

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62. Katherine Doud, "Bolcom, Pulitzer-winning composer, is nonchalant- but his fans aren't," *Kalamazoo Gazette*.

63. C. Curtis-Smith to Henry A. Upper, February 16, 1987, February 27, 1987, box 15, CCSC, WMUA.

64. Katherine Doud, "Local composer's work to open Gilmore fest," *Kalamazoo Gazette*, January 13, 1990.

of popular idioms remains consistently present, as does his characteristic rhythmic complexity, but the Concerto investigates a new cultural musical practice: change ringing. This technique developed within the English handbell tradition; initially, it was a way to utilize the forward and backward motion of the handbells. The manipulation results in relatively consistent rhythmic structures with shifting patterns of (fixed) pitches, an idea that Curtis-Smith borrowed first a decade before in *Music for Handbells* and incorporated again into the Concerto, particularly in the third movement. Nancy Malitz observes, “It is an interesting piece, showing little of the Americana qualities that mark Curtis-Smith’s earlier compositions. Instead... it was inspired by the tolling patterns of English bell towers.”<sup>65</sup> These aspects were not Curtis-Smith’s only compositional foci, though; he ultimately found himself concerned with form, especially given the intended length of the piece. In an application for sabbatical leave in the fall of 1990, he describes his compositional experience:

Ultimately, what I gained from writing the Left Hand Piano Concerto was an increased awareness of form in its most basic, structural sense. Most of my music, going back to the beginning of my career as a composer, has been largely sound-oriented, with a preoccupation with small forms; timbre and programmatic depiction have been more important than form and structure. However, with the Left Hand Concerto, concerns for long-range structure have become apparent.<sup>66</sup>

Another area of particular academic and compositional interest to Curtis-Smith was sub-Saharan African music. Many of his pieces of the 1990s incorporate musical elements drawn from African traditions; according to Remek, “these include the Second Piano Trio (1992), *African Laughter* (1994), the Second Symphony (1996), and *Masques d’Afrique* (1997).”<sup>67</sup> His

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65. Nancy Malitz, “Pianist shows ‘offbeat’ can be beautiful,” *Detroit News*, May 4, 1991.

66. C. Curtis-Smith, Sabbatical Application, September 1990, box 15, CCSC, WMUA.

67. Robert Thomas Remek, “A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith” (doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, 2002), 30.

personal notes from the period contain extensive research on the topic; his files include samples of music for mbira in several traditions, articles describing the musical cultures found in countries including South Africa, Zambia, and Ghana, and transcriptions of various ethnic instruments and melodies.<sup>68</sup>

The confusion surrounding Curtis-Smith's name had not been cleared up even by 1990, in spite of the almost 30 years of hyphenation. In a letter to Barbara Mandell at Tanglewood regarding a commemorative book the institute was putting together to celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, he said somewhat facetiously, "Note: my full name is actually Curtis Otto Bismarck Curtis-Smith (!) You may want to use it thus: Curtis O.B. Curtis-Smith; I do not much like this: Curtis Curtis-Smith."<sup>69</sup>

In 1990, Curtis-Smith began the process to request another sabbatical leave, this time for the 1991-1992 academic year. His intentions for this leave were, as usual, compositionally based; he states his goals as twofold, a violin concerto (commissioned by Dennis Russell Davies and Sergiu Luca) and a theatrically minded chamber piece. He also meant to spend time in study for the two pieces; the concerto was to be in a loosely neoclassical in style, so he spent time studying concerto form from the classical to the contemporary period. For the theater piece, a commission from Sergiu Luca for the Da Camera Society, Curtis-Smith studied Native American music; the piece was to commemorate the quincentennial of Columbus's arrival in America.<sup>70</sup>

*Gold Are My Flowers* represents something of a change in the composer's attitude toward theater. Early in 1991, Curtis-Smith expressed his thoughts on opera to Don Hunt of the

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68. Folder: "Mbira/ African tradition notes," box 15, CCSC, WMUA.

69. C. Curtis-Smith to Barbara Mandell, April 15, 1990, box 15, CCSC, WMUA.

70. C. Curtis-Smith, Application for Sabbatical Leave, September 12, 1990, box 15, CCSC, WMUA.

*Kalamazoo Gazette*; “I toyed with the idea of doing an opera once. Looking back on it now I think the notion was nothing less than insanity. Unless you’re Rossini, you can’t really write an opera in less than seven years.”<sup>71</sup> He remained true to that in the strictest sense; he never wrote a full opera. However, undertaking *Gold Are My Flowers* was likely an equivalent effort. Curtis-Smith worked closely with a Native American poet, Linda Hogan, at the request of commissioner Sergiu Luca, who wanted the voices of the Native American community represented to be as authentic as possible; he was not interested in another grandiose piece glorifying Columbus’s dubious “accomplishment.”

For the duration of the 1996-1997 academic year, Curtis-Smith took another leave of absence from Western Michigan University to serve as Visiting Professor of Music at University of Michigan for a second time.<sup>72</sup> During this time, he shared an office with Bolcom, and the two began to write the piece that eventually became *Collusions*. Curtis-Smith sketched a few measures for piano on a piece of sheet music, and left it on Bolcom’s desk, requesting that his friend add another few measures and return it. Eventually, it grew into four movements, published in 1999.

Though Curtis-Smith’s early years were marked by prolific composition, his productivity slows, slightly, approaching and into the twentieth century. This could have been, in part, due to his health issues; his shared diary with his wife notes several surgeries around 2000, for issues both acute and ongoing.<sup>73</sup>

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71. Hunt, Don. “Composer has international reputation.” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, 26 April 1991.

72. Robert Thomas Remek, “A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith” (doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, 2002), 22.

73. Kathryn McCoy and C. Curtis-Smith, diary, January 1- December 31, 2000, box 39, CCSC, WMUA.

After the flush of dramatic experimental creativity that characterized Curtis-Smith's early compositions of the 1970s, the composer began slowly and incrementally working his way back to a more traditional musical language, which was mostly settled in by the turn of the century. *Twelve Etudes for Piano* (2000) explores new pedagogical concerns in a traditional teaching medium, and though difficult to play, the piece is relatively accessible to listeners. *More African Laughter* incorporates aspects of Curtis-Smith's favored sub-Saharan musical traditions, but the effect is, as percussionist Judy Moonert describes it, almost Baroque.<sup>74</sup> This is consistent with Curtis-Smith's interests; he felt that he and his contemporaries considered the previous musical "age" to be unacceptably passé, but the ages before that were ripe with possibilities.<sup>75</sup>

Curtis-Smith applied for another sabbatical leave in 2000. He proposed two compositions for this one; a set of preludes, numbering between twelve and twenty four, and a set of piano pieces of intermediate difficulty to be recorded by Marks Music. He also worked on two recording projects; a recording of the two aforementioned piano pieces, and a recording of a variety of standards of the piano repertoire. The preludes may have developed into the *Twelve Etudes*; the other works are unsubstantiated.

In 2002, Curtis-Smith and Kathy moved from their home on Woods Lake to a nearby Frank Lloyd Wright home. Designed over the course of 1949 and 1950 for Eric and Ann Brown, the home is in Wright's "Usonian" style, aimed to provide small, affordable homes to those in the "United States of North America." The home, overlooking Little Asylum Lake, provided enough space for the piano Gatsby in the living room, as well as studies for both Kathy and

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74. Judy Moonert in conversation with the author, February 15, 2019.

75. C. Curtis-Smith, Sabbatical Application, September 1990, box 15, CCSC, WMUA.

Curtis-Smith.<sup>76</sup>

Unfortunately, the last years of the composer's life were not a happy time. Curtis-Smith and McCoy separated in 2012, and the composer moved back to his first home on Woods Lake.<sup>77</sup> According to his friends, the house wasn't on the market; Curtis-Smith got in touch with the people who had purchased home from himself and McCoy, and simply asked them if he could buy his house back. They agreed, but the composer was unable to find the peace he sought. He had always found change difficult, and he reverted to old patterns from earlier in his life; his old home, acquaintances who spoke a dialect of German similar to that of his family. After 2010, he stopped composing almost entirely; his position at the school became honorary.<sup>78</sup> He passed away on October 10, 2014 in his home.<sup>79</sup>

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76. Ardyce Czuchna-Curl, "My Place: Frank Lloyd Wright-designed home has the classic hallmarks," Special to the *Kalamazoo Gazette*, November 27, 2011. [https://www.mlive.com/living/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2011/11/my\\_place\\_frank\\_lloyd\\_wright-de.html](https://www.mlive.com/living/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2011/11/my_place_frank_lloyd_wright-de.html) accessed 2/22/19 at 10:25 a.m.

77. Kathryn McCoy in discussion with the author, February 24, 2019, Kalamazoo, MI.

78. David Colson in conversation with the author, February 18, 2019, Kalamazoo, MI.

79. Linda S. Mah, "WMU composer and pianist C. Curtis-Smith, 72, had a long affiliation with Gilmore Festival" *MLive*, October 14, 2014.



## COMPOSITIONS

Compositions are listed in approximate chronological order according to year of completion.

At least one piece is unrecovered; a duet for two pianos, four hands, developed and performed with Phyllis Rappeport during Curtis-Smith's early days at Western Michigan University. Rappeport reports that the piece included the use of golf balls, a technique later utilized in *Rhapsodies*, and other extended techniques, and was toured both in the United States and internationally on at least one occasion. She suggests that the piece may have been "repudiated."<sup>80</sup>

A sabbatical application from 2000 discusses a set of preludes for piano, as well as a set of pieces at an intermediate level, that the composer was planning to compose for and record with Edward Marks Music. It is possible that Curtis-Smith used the *12 Etudes* for the former purpose; Marks did publish the sheet music for that piece in 2000. If the composer completed the intermediate works, they are as yet unrecovered.

### 1. Sonata for Flute and Piano

Instrumentation: duet for flute and piano

Completion Date: ~1963

Performance time: 15 minutes

Notes: Sonata for Flute and Piano is sometimes listed as Flute Sonata.

Source:

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

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80. Phyllis Rappeport, interview with the author, February 27, 2019.

## 2. Six Movements for String Quartet

Instrumentation: quartet for two violins, viola, and cello

Completion Date: 1964

Performance time: 25 minutes

Notes: Six Movements is sometimes listed as String Quartet No. 1. or *Six Pieces for String*

*Quartet*. It consists of six movements entitled:

I. Gram e elegiaco

II. Allegro furioso

III. Adagio religioso- Energico marcato

IV. Misterioso e poco marcato

V. Allegro rafforzato

VI. Adagio sostenuto

In the score, principle parts are indicated by brackets; the main melodic line moves between parts with regularity.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

## 3. Schoenberg: *Six Little Piano Pieces, Op. 19, Orchestrated for Chamber Orchestra*

Instrumentation: for chamber orchestra (flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn (2), trumpet (2), trombone (2), harp, celeste, violin (2), viola, cello, bass)

Completion Date: December 1965

Notes: This piece is an orchestration of Schoenberg's piano piece *Six Little Piano Pieces*, op. 19.

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

4. *All Day I Hear*

Instrumentation: for twelve a capella voices, SATB

Completion Date: 1965

Performance time: 5 minutes

Notes: *All Day I Hear* is a setting of the poem of the same title by James Joyce.

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

5. Second String Quartet

Instrumentation: quartet for two violins, viola, cello

Completion Date: 1965

Performance time: 30-40 minutes

Notes: The Second String Quartet is sometimes listed as String Quartet No. 2.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

6. *Constructions in Silver I/II*

Instrumentation: flute

Completion Date: 1966-7

Performance time: 6 minutes

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

7. *Sections*

Instrumentation: trio for flute, cello, and contrabass

Completion Date: 1967

Performance time: 11 minutes

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

8. *Pianacaglia*

Instrumentation: solo piano

Completion Date: 1967

Performance time: 8 minutes

Notes: Curtis-Smith refers to it as “a passacaglia for piano.”

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

9. *Yu Sareba (Rice Leaves)*

Instrumentation: orchestra (“large”)

Completion Date: 1967-1968

Performance time: 20 minutes

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

10. *Trajectories*

Instrumentation: solo piano

Completion Date: 1968

Performance time: 10 minutes

Notes: *Trajectories* consists of three pieces/movements with varying applications of improvisation. Piece I allows for improvised rhythm; Piece II, improvised pitch content; and Piece III, improvisation or adherence to notation as desired by the performer. Pieces I and III utilize extended techniques including “direct manipulations of the strings... unusual pedal effects... sympathetic vibrations, [and] overtones.” In an article for the *Forum of Fargo-Moorhead*, writer Arthur Koenig calls the piece *Trajectories I*, and describes it as having 4 movements, which are “owing much to the styles of Anton Webern... and to Karlheinz Stockhausen,” though he expresses a doubt as to “whether this type of music will be around fifty or so years from now.”

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Koenig, Arthur. “Curtis Smith Virtuosity Formidable.” *The Forum of Fargo-Moorhead*. November 8, 1967.

11. “*Till Thousands Thee. Lps.*” *A Secular Alleluia Without...*

Instrumentation: for chamber ensemble (two trumpets, six soprano vocalists, four percussionists, celesta, and three water glasses); the instrumentation is alternately listed as six soprano vocalists, two trumpets, and percussion

Completion Date: 1969

Performance time: 15-20 minutes

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. “Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck).” *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

12. *Quotation: Voices*

Instrumentation: brass quintet

Completion Date: 1969

Performance time: 10 minutes

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

13. *Passant. Un. Nous Passons. Deux. De Notre Somme Passons. Trois.*

Instrumentation: for nineteen voices and nine instruments; alternately listed as nineteen voices, chamber ensemble, and electronic sounds

Completion Date: 1970

Notes: Curtis-Smith translates the title as: "Passing. One. We are passing. Two. From Sleep we are passing. Three." The text includes settings of Rilke, Joyce, and Homer, among others.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

14. *Canticum Novum / Desideria*

Instrumentation: for ten voices and eleven instruments; elsewhere, for six soprano voices, four tenor voices, and chamber ensemble

Completion Date: 1971

Performance time: 14-15 minutes

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

15. *Piece du Jour*

Instrumentation: solo piano

Completion Date: 1981

Performance time: duration variable, 5-8 minutes

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

16. *Fanaffair for Fanny IV*

Instrumentation: nine trumpets in three unequal groups and four-channel tape

Completion Date: 1971

Performance time: 7 minutes

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

17. *Electronics Study/ Gong Sounds*

Instrumentation: four channel tape- 1/2" 15 ips

Completion Date: 1972

Performance time: 5 minutes

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

18. *Preludium*

Instrumentation: for 13 instruments

Completion Date: 1972

Performance time: 5 minutes

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

19. *Comedie*

Instrumentation: for two soprano voices and chamber orchestra

Completion Date: 1972

Premiere: Tanglewood, Massachusetts, 1972

Performance time: 20-23 minutes

Notes: Curtis-Smith calls *Comédie* a quasi-theatre piece; it incorporates texts from Samuel

Beckett, Luigi Bartolini, Guiseppe Ungaretti, Federico Garcia Lorca, Iosif Brodsky, and Rainer Maria Rilke. It was composed at the Tanglewood Institute under the tutelage of Bruno Madera in the summer of 1972 and premiered at the same event. The piece was awarded the Koussevitzky Prize.

*Comédie* consists of six “Parts” and six “Interpolations,” a maximum of four of which can be utilized in any one performance. Curtis-Smith provides some guidelines for the use of the Interpolations between the Parts, but gives the performers and conductor control over the resultant structure. There is also an element of physical motion; the players and vocalists move between “stations” provided in a diagram by the composer at various times during the performance.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. “Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck).” *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

## 20. *Xanthie: Fanfare for the Dark*

Instrumentation: for nine instrumental groups spatially arranged

Completion Date: 1972

Performance time: 6 minutes

Notes: Hertzog, in *Contemporary Composers*, lists the piece title as *Xanthie: Winter Pieces*, calls



it an orchestral work, and gives the date as 1974. *Fanfare for the Dark* is categorized as a chamber piece (for 9 instruments) and dated 1972.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

### 21. *Mateus*

Instrumentation: duet for flute (plus piccolo) and piano

Completion Date: 1972

Performance time: 5 minutes

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

### 22. *A Song of the Degrees*

Instrumentation: trio for two pianos and percussion

Completion Date: 1972

Performance time: 18-19 minutes

Notes: *A Song of the Degrees* was selected to represent the United States at the Gaudeamus

International Music Week, held in The Netherlands in 1974; it was one of fifteen pieces chosen out of over 200 applicants. It was performed in Montreal the same year. *A Song of the Degrees* was the first piece on which Curtis-Smith used bowed piano.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Remek, Robert Thomas. "A Study of Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith." Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002.

23. *In Summerian Sunshine*

Instrumentation: musique concrete

Completion Date: 1973

Performance time: 9 minutes

Notes: A recording of this piece has not yet been recovered.

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

24. *Five Sonorous Inventions*

Instrumentation: duet for violin and piano

Completion Date: 1973

Publication Details: Second edition published by Editions Salabert in 1993

Performance time: 15-18 minutes

Notes: *Five Sonorous Inventions* was chosen as a 4<sup>th</sup> Category (chamber pieces with up to 11 performers) winner in the VII Concorso Internazionale di Composizione della Società Italiana Musica Contemporanea in 1974.

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

25. *Ordres*

Instrumentation: solo piano (prepared)

Completion Date: 1973

Notes: *Ordres* is dedicated to Curtis-Smith's early teacher, David Burge, and intended for his performance. As of 1974, Curtis-Smith intended the piece to be recorded on a CRI label, funded by a grant from the Martha Baird Rockefeller Foundation. David Burge

performed *Ordres* on the recording; he also performed the piece regularly in the time after its premiere. According to Curtis-Smith, the United States Information Agency, a US government agency “engaged in public diplomacy outside the United States,” took *Ordres* on tour in Europe, accompanied by lectures by Daryl Dayton; when David Burge was not available to perform the piece in person, videos, recordings, and slides of the score were presented. In a letter to Curtis-Smith, Joseph Robbone Described the piece as containing “electronic-like effects... which [achieve] a remarkable timbral result and above all, in the first two movements achieves a beautiful poetic atmosphere.”

Curtis-Smith was awarded the Concorso Internazionale di Musica e Danze G. B. Viotti Gold Medal for *Ordres*, which he had to travel to Italy to retrieve; international shipping regulations would not allow the solid gold award to be sent in the mail.

Sources:

Avant, Gayle, and Avant. "United States Information Agency." In *Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, edited by Spencer C. Tucker. 2nd ed. ABC-CLIO, 2011. Accessed February 17, 2019.  
[http://libproxy.library.wmich.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/abcvw/united\\_states\\_information\\_agency/0?institutionId=1566](http://libproxy.library.wmich.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/abcvw/united_states_information_agency/0?institutionId=1566).

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

## 26. *Rhapsodies*

Instrumentation: solo piano

Publication Details: 1973; second edition published by Editions Salabert, Paris, in 1993

(copyright 1980)

Commission: David Burge

Performance time: 15-16 minutes

Notes: *Rhapsodies* was awarded the gold medal in the Concorso Internazionale di Musica e

Danza G. B. Viotti competition. The titles of the four movements are taken from François Couperin's *Ordres*; Barbara Lieurance feels that "its rich resonances, precision, and delicacy create a sound world that is kin to French music of the 20<sup>th</sup> century."

David Burge played for the CRI recording (SD-345) of the piece; he describes the piece as "the most astonishingly imaginative work for solo piano written in the past ten years." He describes the musical progression over the course of the four movements; movement one is mostly sounds on the keyboard, movements two and three combine sounds from both the keyboard and the interior of the piano, and the fourth movement is "almost entirely inside the instrument." Barbara Lieurance describes this process as "follow[ing] a journey that parallels that of the exploring composer: beginning traditionally at the keyboard, the music progresses until it is being played completely inside the piano."

A companion piece to *Rhapsodies*, entitled *Meditation for Barbara*, was written by John Oliver in 2012 for Barbara Lieurance. The piece uses four of the same bows, but adds techniques not used in Curtis-Smith's piece.

Sources:

Burge, David. "Contemporary Piano: Curtis Curtis-Smith's Rhapsodies."

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Lieurance, Barbara. Program notes, "Distinguished Alumni Series: Barbara Lieurance, Piano." Western Michigan University, October 6, 2012.

27. *Winter Pieces*

Instrumentation: chamber orchestra

Completion Date: 1974

Premiere: July 26, 1974 at Connecticut College; part of the American Dance Festival

Commission: American Dance Festival, for performance by the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and the Louis Falco Dance Company of New York City; financed by the Sheldon Soffer Management and the Charles Rheinhard Management Agencies

Performance time: 24-30 minutes

Notes: Performances of *Winter Pieces* took place later in 1974 at Alice Tully Hall.

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

28. *(Bells) Belle du Jour*

Instrumentation: piano and orchestra

Completion Date: 1975

Publication Information: Editions Salabert published *(Bells)* in 1976.

Premiere: Kalamazoo, MI, 1975

Commission: The composition was supported by a Research and Sponsored Programs grant from Western Michigan University.

Performance time: 20-22 minutes

Notes: *(Bells) Belle du Jour* was awarded the Prix du Francis Salabert.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

29. *Suite in Four Movements*

Instrumentation: harpsichord

Completion Date: 1975

Publication Date: Published by Elkan-Vogel (Theodore Presser) in 1976

Commission: Commissioned by Igor Kipnis

Performance time: 10-12 minutes

Notes: *Suite in Four Movements* was written during Curtis-Smith's sabbatical leave spanning fall 1975 to spring 1976.

Remek, quoting Hansell, describes the piece as “explor[ing] new sonorities by duplicating a note or cluster of notes, on the second manual which have just been sounded and held on the first. Extended passages lie exclusively in either the bass or treble registers.” Curtis-Smith describes the piece in a sabbatical report as follows:

The first and second movements (Prelude and Double) can be considered “upbeat” or introductory movements to the third movement. (Free Passacaglia). The Double is simply a variation in the Baroque sense, that is, an ornamented version of the Prelude.

The Free Passacaglia is intended as an allusion to such pieces as the Couperin B-Minor Passacaglia, but only in the spirit of such works, not in the strict literal sense of the Baroque Passacaglia. Although the rhythm appears forbiddingly [sic] difficult, at times it is actually rather straightforward, since even quarters maintain a kind of “walking bass” line, slightly reminiscent of a string bass pizzicato in a jazz context. Later, (especially Pages 12 and the bottom of 13) there is a “take-off” on French Overture rhythms, complete with double-dotting and all. The last movement (Postlude) begins, tonally, where the preceding movement finished, and is, in essence, a slow-motion transformation of certain material from the Passacaglia.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. “Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck).” *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

Remek, Robert Thomas. “A Study of Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith.” Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002.

30. *Tristana Variations*

Instrumentation: solo piano

Completion Date: 1975 or 1976

Commission: Supported by a grant from Research and Sponsored Programs at Western Michigan University

Performance time: 18-25 minutes

Notes: In a letter to his mother in 1976, Curtis-Smith describes the difficulty he was having with a piano piece he was working on, speculated to be *Tristana Variations*. “It has been giving me a lot of trouble—” he writes, “indeed more than any other piece I’ve ever worked on.”

In 1977 he described the completed piece as follows:

These are strophic variations in the literal sense of that term. The pitch succession of each variation (with the exception of Variation Five) is in some cases identical, in other instances approximately identical, with immediate repetitions of pitches the principal variant. Thus, one Variation is differentiated from another chiefly through rhythmic, dynamic, and registral means, the melodic and harmonic succession being essentially fixed and inflexible.

Although Variation One was written first, the Second Variation actually presents the melodic succession in its most simple, un-ornamented form. A canon at the unison, the Second Variation departs from a strict canonic imitation at certain points by heterophonically shifting pitches forward or backward out of their normal canonic succession. Much like a canon where the time interval between the two voices is constantly changing, sometimes suddenly, other times gradually and predictably.

Variation Five is the largest movement of the set, and is based on a passacaglia-like repetition of a basic segment of the material over and over, although the “basic segment” is considerably longer here than the eight measure unit of the Baroque passacaglia. This basic unit in its first appearance extends from the opening of the movement through the first measure of the bottom of Page 24. (The low B-flats always “signal” this return.) On each succeeding appearance of this unit (four in all) the material is expanded, until the last appearance (Page 31) when it becomes extremely complex and covers the entire keyboard simultaneously.

Variation Six is in the nature of a postlude, and recapitulates material, in a slow-motion version, from Variation One.

The completed piece is dedicated to David Burge.

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

31. *Three Pieces for Harp*

Instrumentation: solo harp

Publication Date: 1976

Premiere: Western Michigan University, June 12, 1976.

Performance time: 12 minutes

Notes: In *Three Pieces for Harp*, Curtis-Smith applies the bowing technique he pioneered for piano to a pedal harp. He describes the result:

The second piece is an experiment in applying the bowing technique to the harp. The advantage inherent in using the bows on the harp is that, with the bow threaded through a given set of strings, the pedals can be changed to produce different chords and vertical sonorities without having to use a second bow. This is in fact, the basis of this movement. Only a single bow is used throughout, and at certain points, the harpist actually re-threads the bow while playing, all without interrupting the continuity of the music.

He adds that “the third piece is a transformation of the first, although not as literal a transformation as in the *Tristana Variations*.”

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

32. *Unisonics*

Instrumentation: duet for alto saxophone and piano

Completion Date: 1976

Premiere: Indiana University, November 4, 1976 by Curtis-Smith on piano and Trent Kynaston on saxophone

Commission: Trent Kynaston

Performance time: 15-18 minutes



Notes: In addition to the Indiana University premiere, performances by Kynaston and Curtis-Smith took place at Western Michigan University on November 5, 1976 and University of Michigan on November 15, 1976.

Brian Ayscue writes in *The Saxophone Symposium* that the “substance of the work [lies in the] constant metamorphoses of pitch-timbre [that] link the two instruments as one.”

When speaking of his intention when writing *Unisonics*, Curtis-Smith says,

I have attempted to merge the sounds of the two instruments as one, largely through the use of unisons or the heterophonic ornamentation of a single melodic line. The concept of “unison” in this work refers to more than the duplication of pitch; through the use of extended techniques for both instruments, the attack and timbral characteristics of the two instruments are brought closer together.

Sources:

Ayscue, Brian. *The Saxophone Symposium* 4, no. 1 (Winter, 1979).

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

### 33. *Music for Handbells*

Instrumentation: for ten players, on a three-octave set of handbells; elsewhere, 37 handbells

Completion Date: 1976

Premiere: First Baptist Church of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo, MI, June 28, 1976

Performance time: 7-8 minutes

Notes: At an earlier stage of development, the piece was known as *Music for Bells*. The completed piece was recorded for CRI SD 338.

In performance, each player receives three or four bells for which they are responsible. Pitches are specifically assigned to performers based on their intervals; Curtis-Smith says that “the intervals available to each of the ten players are the intervals

out of which the piece is constructed.” Mostly tonal, a version of Curtis-Smith’s program notes describe the piece as consisting of “dyads [that] are constructed around the pitch center C, with G (sometimes G major) a strong supporting sonority.”

Rather than the traditional treble-bass staff notation used for the majority of handbell music, Curtis-Smith separates the parts onto their own staves; ten parts for ten players. This is primarily because of the level of control Curtis-Smith wished to exert over the sounding of individual bells, as he describes:

Since handbells produce tones of such extraordinary duration, every pitch can be thought of as forming and maintaining a separate level throughout the piece. Melodies then become an intricate series of staggered repeated notes, sometimes widely spaced, but nonetheless ultimately simply repeated notes, which by their immediate juxtaposition in musical space happen to form melodies, lines, and harmonies.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. “Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck).” *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

### 34. *Partita*

Instrumentation: septet for flute, clarinet, piano, percussion, violin, viola, and cello

Completion Date: 1977

Premiere: Boston, 1977

Commission: Boston Musica Viva

Performance time: 18-19 minutes

Notes: *Partita* is, according to a letter from Curtis-Smith to his mother in 1976, a reorchestration of saxophone and piano duet *Unisonics*.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

35. *Ensembles/Solos*

Instrumentation: for chamber ensemble (clarinet, saxophone, horn, trumpet, vibraphone, guitar, harp, two pianos (one player), violin, viola, and cello)

Completion Date: 1977

Premiere: Ann Arbor, MI, 1977

Commission: Written for the Contemporary Directions Ensemble at the University of Michigan

Performance time: 17-20 minutes

Notes: Curtis-Smith composed *Ensembles/Solos* during his first term at the University of Michigan as Visiting Professor. The piece calls for two pianos, to be played by one pianist sitting between the two. One of the pianos is in standard equal temperament tuning. The other piano employs what Curtis-Smith calls Jorgensen 5 and 7 temperament, discussed at length in Jorgensen's book *Tuning*. In essence, the black keys divide the octave in five, and the white keys, seven; between the two pianos, each octave is divided in 24 uneven parts. In terms of use, Curtis-Smith says that "the three tuning systems offered by the two pianos... are rarely used independently, and are rather exploited for the huge spectrum of unequal micro-intervals that their simultaneous use creates." The piece makes occasional use of bowing, but no other preparations aside from the tuning.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

36. *On a Ground* by Henry Purcell

Instrumentation: solo organ

Completion Date: 1978

Premiere: Kathryn Lowe, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan

Notes: *On a Ground* is a parody of Henry Purcell's *Now That the Sun Hath Veil'd His Light*, from which Curtis-Smith borrows the continuo bass line; the composer wrote the piece while in London in 1978 as part of his Guggenheim Fellowship. It was originally intended to be part of *Masquerades*, but Curtis-Smith removed it to better balance the whole of the work; like the other movements of that piece, however, *On a Ground* is intended to parody an aspect of traditional organ music, in this case the ground bass.

Source:

Remek, Robert Thomas. "A Study of Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith." Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002.

37. *Tonalities*

Instrumentation: duet for clarinet and percussion

Completion Date: 1978

Premiere: Sioux Falls, SD in 1978

Commission: South Dakota State University

Performance time: 10-15 minutes

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

38. *Gargoyles*

Instrumentation: solo organ

Completion Date: 1978

Performance time: 6 minutes

Notes: Though initially intended to stand alone, *Gargoyles* eventually became part of *Masquerades*, completed the same year.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

### 39. *Masquerades*

Instrumentation: organ

Completion Date: 1978

Publication Date: Edward B. Marks Music in 1979

Premiere and Commission: *Masquerades* was commissioned and premiered by William Albright. Four movements were premiered by Albright at the American Guild of Organists National Convention in Seattle in 1978; he premiered three further movements the same year at the van Daalen Organ Festival of Inauguration at the Eastman School of Music.

Performance time: 30 minutes

Recordings: CRI SD-409

Notes: Remek describes *Masquerades* as developing from Curtis-Smith's German Seventh Day Adventist roots; several Protestant hymns are quoted in the piece, as well as a portrayal of Curtis-Smith's "association of the organ with bagpipes and carousels in other movements or stream-of-consciousness kinds of free musical association in which musical ideas unpredictably submerge and resurface."

The sheet music contains historical images of figures playing bagpipes and other instruments; not merely on the margins of the pages, but in between staves and among the notes as well. Each movement is intended to parody an aspect of traditional organ technique.

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Chihara, Paul and C. Curtis-Smith. Notes to American Contemporary: Chihara and Curtis-Smith. Chorus of the New England Conservatory conducted by Lorna Cooke deVaron. Men's Glee Club of the University of California at Los Angeles conducted by Don Weiss. William Albright, organ. LP CRI SD 409. 1979.

Edward B. Marks Music Company Classical. "Masquerades." Accessed February 23, 2019. <http://www.ebmarks.com/catalog/keyboard/curtis-smith-curtis/masquerades/>.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

Remek, Robert Thomas. "A Study of Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith." Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002.

#### 40. *Plays and Rimes*

Instrumentation: brass quintet and piano

Completion Date: 1979

Commission: Western Brass Quintet

Performance time: 18-20 minutes

Notes: *Plays and Rimes* was played at a reception given in Curtis-Smith's honor when he won the Distinguished Faculty Scholar award in 1979.

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

#### 41. *Sundry Dances*

Instrumentation: chamber ensemble (9 players) consisting of flute (piccolo), oboe, clarinet (B-flat and E-flat), bassoon (contrabassoon), saxophone (sopranino (optional), soprano, alto, baritone, and bass), trumpet in C, trombone, tuba (euphonium and B-flat) and string bass

Completion Date: 1980

Performance time: 26 minutes

Notes: Curtis-Smith's program notes read:

*Sundry Dances* consists of five movements loosely based on dance or instrumental styles. Movement I, "Death Jig," contains allusions to Chopin, Brahms, Mahler, Louis Armstrong, rock, boogie, jazz, and blues. Curtis-Smith describes the movement as a palindrome. The second movement, "In Dulci jubilo," gives the impression of a defective carousel. "Dream Blues," the third movement, creates an instrumental backdrop for the more traditionally jazz oriented instruments to wander through a variety of key areas. In the fourth movement, "'Wie lieblich ist doch Herr, die Statte...'" (Jig for an Elephant)," the circus idea from the second movement returns with a caricature of an elephant, a reed organ, and other circus sounds, the humor of which is indicated to performers with notes like "clumsy, preposterous," "stupidly trying again," and "ignore this repeat." The final movement, "Pipes and Drones," is intended to evoke bagpipes; not just one player, but many, rushing toward the same goal.

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

#### 42. *Preludes and Blues*

Instrumentation: solo guitar

Completion Date: 1979

Commission: by Michael Lorimer

Performance time: 15 minutes

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

#### 43. *Black and Blues*

Instrumentation: brass quintet; sometimes listed with piano

Completion Date: 1979-1980

Performance time: 12-14 minutes

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

44. *For Gatsby* (Steinway D81281)

Instrumentation: solo piano

Completion Date: 1980

Premiere: New York City, 1982

Performance time: 18-25 minutes

Notes: *For Gatsby* contains four movements: I. Always Rhythmic; Molto Allegro; II. Falling

Asleep at the Barbershop; III. Scherzo (Joke); and IV. Allegro— Very Rhythmic— With a Rock Drive. Curtis-Smith's description of the third movement details the use of two motifs; one represented his own wife, Kathy McCoy, and the other depicted Joan Morris, the wife of his close friend William Bolcom. Bolcom penned Joan's motif at the piano *Gatsby*, and incorporated both themes in a piece of his own: *Knockstück* from *Three Dance Portraits*.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

45. *Barbershop String Quartet*



Instrumentation: string quartet

Completion Date: 1980-1982

Premiere: Chicago, 1982

Commission: Kronos String Quartet

Performance time: 25 minutes

Notes: This quartet is also known as “String Quartet no. 3” or the Third String Quartet.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. “Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck).” *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

Remek, Robert Thomas. “A Study of Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith.” Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002.

#### 46. *Music for an Orangewench*

Instrumentation: guitar quartet

Completion Date: 1980-1981

Commission: the Omega Guitar Quartet (London, England)

Performance time: 10 minutes

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. “Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck).” *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

#### 47. *New Orleans Funeral Music*

Completion Date: 1981 (estimated)

Commission: Rijnmond Saxofoon Kwartet

Performance time: ca. 12 minutes

Notes: The piece is listed in Curtis-Smith's resume ca. 1981 as "in progress;" as it has not yet been found elsewhere, it may not have materialized.

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

48. *Great American Symphony (GAS!)*

Instrumentation: orchestra

Completion Date: Curtis-Smith's own copies of the score are dated 1981 and 1982; other publications vary between these dates.

Publication: Edward B. Marks Music, whose website lists the date as 1982; according to Curtis-Smith, the company published it in 1986

Premiere: Kalamazoo, MI

Commission: for Yoshimi Takeda and the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra

Notes: William Albright assisted Curtis-Smith in naming the piece, which the composer had originally intended to call *Song and Dance*. Curtis-Smith recounts in a letter to his mother from 1981,

Actually, Bill Albright helped me choose this title, or rather, the two of us stumbled upon it together quite by accident. I had originally called the piece SONG AND DANCE, but Bill Albright pointed out that he already knew of at least two pieces called that, so it seemed wise to change the title. I am quite certain that nobody has used the present title before."

When asked to comment on the use of humor in the piece, particularly in the final movement ("Dido's Dance: Dido Dies (Irae)") Curtis-Smith says, "It is funny and fiendish at the same time. There are musical "jokes" but, like many practical jokes, they conceal sarcastic motives behind the laughing mask..." and "On one level the piece may be heard as mere entertainment, while on a deeper level it may (and should!) be heard as

an ironic, bitter and even frightening commentary on the very tunes and styles it purports to trifle with.” This humor is evident in the physical music; the score teems with tiny illustrations, not just around but within the music itself. Most of these are pieces of American iconography— images from the earliest days of the country’s history— as well as blatantly patriotic imagery such as eagles and flags.

*GAS!*, as Curtis-Smith referred to it, represents the height of Curtis-Smith’s referential phase. Throughout the piece and particularly in the last movement, quotations abound, from the *Dies Irae* to Purcell to heavy metal to the timeless “I’ve Got a Gal in Kalamazoo;” an appropriate inclusion for a Kalamazoo-based composer writing for the Kalamazoo Symphony.

Dennis Russell Davies conducted the piece repeatedly with the Indianapolis Symphony, the American Composers Orchestra, the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, and the West German Radio Orchestra. The last instance provided the recording used on Albany Records TR475.

Sources:

Curtis-Smith, C. *Twelve Etudes for Piano; The Great American Symphony (GAS!)*. C. Curtis-Smith, piano. Cologne West German Radio Symphony Orchestra directed by Dennis Russell Davies. CD Albany Records TR475. 2002.

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Edward B. Marks Music Company Classical. “Great American Symphony.” Accessed January 13, 2019. <http://www.ebmarks.com/catalog/orchestra/curtis-smith-curtis/great-american-symphony/>.

Hertzog, Christian. “Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck).” *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

Remek, Robert Thomas. “A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith.” Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002.

49. *Invocation—Alap*

Instrumentation: SATB choir with solo voices

Completion Date: 1982

Notes: Remek notes the influence of the Indian classical tradition on this piece.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

Remek, Robert Thomas. "A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith." Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002.

50. *Sweetgrass Trio*

Instrumentation: piano trio (piano, violin, and cello)

Completion Date: 1982

Publication: Piedmont, 1983

Commission: the New Arts Trio

Premiere: according to Hertzog in *Contemporary Composers*, New York City, 1982; as per the score, 1983 at the Eastman School of Music by the New Arts Trio

Performance time: 15 minutes

Notes: In his notes with the score, Curtis-Smith relates the *Sweetgrass Trio* to *The Great American Symphony* with its heavily referential attitude and sardonic humor. The piece is three movements— I. Andante con moto, II. Allegretto Scherzando, and III. Pesante— and rehearsal markings include "Drolly Misterioso," "Threatening!!" and "cruel!! brutal!!! smash the damn piano!!"

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith, Sweetgrass Trio (Piedmont: Nashville, TN, 1983).

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

51. *Songs and Cantillations*

Instrumentation: guitar and orchestra

Completion Date: 1983

Premiere: Philadelphia, 1983

Commission: Michael Lorimer

Performance time: 20 minutes

Notes: Michael Mott describes the piece as utilizing aspects of Jewish ceremonial and cultural musical tradition.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

Mott, Michael. "Orchestra opens on modern note" in the *Wilmington Star News*, October 12, 1988.

52. *Ragmala- A Garland of Rags*

Instrumentation: quintet for guitar and string quartet (two violins, viola, and cello)

Completion Date: 1983

Performance time: 12 minutes

Notes: There exists some possibility that *Ragmala* is the same piece as *Quintet* of 1985; Hertzog lists *Ragmala*, but not *Quintet*, among compositions, and the manuscript for *Quintet* has not been found.

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

53. *Variations on Amazing Grace*

Instrumentation: solo organ

Completion Date: 1983

Performance time: 10 minutes

Notes: Hertzog states that the piece was arranged for orchestra in 1983-4; Remek clarifies that

Curtis-Smith did begin the composition, but withdrew the effort before completing it.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

Remek, Robert Thomas. "A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith." Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002.

54. *Beastly Rhymes*

Instrumentation: SATB chorus with optional piccolo

Completion Date: 1983-4

Commission: New Jersey Music Educators Convention

Premiere: New Jersey, 1984

Performance time: 20 minutes

Notes: *Beastly Rhymes* consists of thirteen short pieces based on "tongue-twisters and limericks."

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

55. *Great American Guitar Solo*

Instrumentation: solo guitar

Completion Date: 1982

Publication: Mel Bay Publications, 1984

Commission: Michael Lorimer

Premiere: San Francisco, 1982

Performance time: 6' 25"

Notes: *Great American Guitar Solo (GAGS)* uses much of the vernacular of *The Great American Symphony*, down to the same banner-wielding eagle on the title and notes pages and the liberty bell after the last page. The score is fairly specific in terms of strumming patterns, fingerings, harmonics, and partial bars. Curtis-Smith describes the piece as a chaconne; *GAGS* was one of his experiments in merging classical forms with more contemporary ideas found in jazz and rock.

Sources:

Curtis-Smith, C. *Great American Guitar Solo*. Mel Bay Publications: Pacific, MO, 1984.

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

56. *Chaconne à son goût*

Instrumentation: orchestra

Completion Date: 1984

Premiere: Kalamazoo, MI, 1984

Commission: Supported by a grant from Research and Sponsored Programs at Western Michigan

University.

Performance time: 15 minutes

Notes: The full title according to Hertzog is *Chaconne à son goût (Chaconnes, Puns and Fantasies on Three Notes)*. The name is a play on words, conceived with the help of Leslie Bassett at the University of Michigan; the original phrase is “Chacun à son goût” (each to his own taste) from Die Fledermaus. Curtis-Smith includes the musical quotation toward the end of the piece, an inclusion is “the one element not germane to the piece, an inconsistency I find delightful.

*Chaconne* was written as a tribute to the memory of Herbert Butler, the conductor of the Western Michigan University Orchestra and music director for the South Bend Symphony Orchestra. Curtis-Smith served as accompanist to Butler on several cello recitals, and was planning another at the time of Butler’s death in 1983.

At the time that he wrote *Chaconne*, Curtis Smith describes himself as “attempt[ing] to write music which, while apparently simple on the surface, reveals unexpected complexity underneath.” He goes on to describe how he uses harmonic language from classical or popular forms, but creates complexity in underlying characteristics like phrase structure and textural overlay. He asserts that the music of Haydn is more complex structurally than that of modern composers like Pendericki, and he attempts to imitate the older structural complexity.

As the subtitle implies, most of the piece is in essence a theme and variations on three notes introduced at the beginning of the piece by the strings. As is usual for this period of his composition, references to other forms are woven throughout, as is Curtis-Smith’s characteristic humor; “the ridiculous and the sublime together.”



Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

57. *Alap- Raga Kedar*

Instrumentation: SATB chorus with one percussionist

Completion Date: 1984-1985

Performance time: 6 minutes

Notes: *Alap- Raga Kedar* is believed to be the reworking of an earlier piece, *Invocation- Alap* of 1982. Curtis-Smith states that the intention of the percussion, mostly metallic in nature, is to "delineate the rhythmic cycle, which in this case confines itself to a single tala, the 16-beat tintal."

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

58. *The B-Major Fanfare*

Instrumentation: septet for "seven brass instruments"

Completion Date: 1985

Commission: Western Michigan University

Performance time: 2 minutes

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

59. *More Southpaw Pitching*

Instrumentation: solo piano

Completion Date: the score is dated 1984, but other sources (including Curtis-Smith himself) vary between 1984 and 1985

Premiere: New York City, 1985

Commission: Keyboard Classics

Performance time: 2 minutes

Notes: Curtis-Smith allows for several performance options in *More Southpaw Pitching*. Though the title implies that the piece is for left hand alone, the composer writes for both hands and allows the performer a great deal of freedom in choosing what parts to utilize; he suggests all left hand, or mostly left hand with right hand embellishments, or as much of the full score as possible. He outlines a possibility for a mostly-left realization but clarifies that the performer can freely choose what material to incorporate.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

60. Quintet

Instrumentation: quintet for guitar and string quartet (two violins, viola, and cello)

Completion Date: 1985

Performance time: 12 minutes

Notes: Several modifications are made to the instruments and/or instrumentalists in this piece; each member of the string quartet affixes tiny bells to their bow, and the guitar is tuned to C. The piece is based on (six) ragas from the Hindustani tradition, with an added element of "modulation" to move between ragas. It is possible that this Quintet is the same piece

as *Ragmala* from 1983.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

61. *Garlands*

Instrumentation: (chamber) orchestra

Completion Date: 1985

Performance time: 17 minutes

Notes: *Garlands* is based heavily around Javanese cyclical structures, incorporated into a Western framework, and stratification from the same tradition. Cycles vary in length and use; layers are superimposed over one another. However, in spite of the inspiration from the Javanese tradition, Curtis-Smith was careful not to simply “transcribe” pieces, or even create new works in imitation of the culture’s. He avoided using Javanese instruments or duplicating the timbres or melodies with Western instruments. Instead, he incorporates a specific characteristic of (in this case) Javanese music into his own style.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

62. *Celebration*

Instrumentation: orchestra

Completion Date: 1985

Premiere: Detroit, 1985

Commission: the Upjohn Company, in honor of their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary

Performance time: 6 minutes

Notes: The Upjohn Company’s celebration recurred every night over the course of over two

weeks; the company commissioned Curtis-Smith to write a piece for the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra to perform each night of the celebration. The composer described his goal as to create a work that “would not be a puzzle to people who would hear it... [but would] be interesting enough that the musicians would not be too bored after playing it 19 times.” Though he often employed accessible vernacular in his pieces, especially those from this period of time, he found the experience a valuable opportunity to engage with his audience rather than just with the artistic ideal: “I feel that many times the composer... ends up... writing for a few... people who will understand what he is doing. (He) isn’t really composing music that is used in any way. It is usually so abstract and so idealistic that it’s not something that somebody needs in a sort of day-to-day way.”

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Doud, Katherine. “‘Celebration’ a chance to compose for many.” *Kalamazoo Gazette*. May 15, 1986.

Hertzog, Christian. “Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck).” *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

63. *Sardonic Sketches*

Instrumentation: woodwind quintet

Completion Date: 1986

Commission: Western Wind Quintet, Western Michigan University

Performance time: 22 minutes

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

64. *Bill’s B-Day*

Instrumentation: piano

Completion Date: 1986

Notes: This tiny one-page piece is dedicated to William Bolcom and bears an enthusiastic

“Happy Birthday, Bill!!” with Curtis-Smith’s characteristic scribbles along the right margin of the composer’s copy.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

65. *Civil War Song Cycle*

Instrumentation: duet for mezzo-soprano voice and piano

Completion Date: 1987

Premiere: Chicago, 1987

Performance time: 30 minutes

Notes: The cycle consists of settings of seven poems by Herman Melville and Walt Whitman.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. “Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck).” *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

66. *chansons innocentes*

Instrumentation: duet for soprano voice and piano

Completion Date: 1986-1987

Premiere: Grand Rapids, MI, 1987

Notes: Some of the lesser-known poetry of e. e. cummings provides the texts set in *chansons*;

critical reception of Curtis-Smith’s text choice varied.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

67. *Fantasy Pieces*

Instrumentation: duet for violin and piano

Completion Date: 1987

Premiere: New York City, October 1987

Performance time: 18 minutes

Notes: *Fantasy Pieces* was Curtis-Smith's first use of bowed piano since a decade before; he stopped using the technique to avoid oversaturation. In *Fantasy Pieces*, the bowing is "not for the novelty of the sounds themselves, but... to bring the piano into a closer timbral proximity to the violin." Derrick Henry mentions the visual effectiveness of the piece in his article for the *Atlanta Journal*, though he is not entirely convinced by the musical content. Charles Ward, in the *Houston Chronicle*, describes how the 8 bows used in the piano, and how important the attention to detail is in terms of angle and speed. According to Curtis-Smith's program notes, the five movements are entitled "Echoes," "Whims," "Nocturne (Aeolian Harp)," "Capriccio," and "Romance," in reference to Romantic era character pieces; the "echoes" are not literal, and the "romance" refers to a "lyrical composition in an idyllic mood" rather than a love story.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Henry, Derrick. "Atlanta Virtuosi Offers Spirited Performance." *Atlanta Journal*. April 18, 1989.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

Ward, Charles. "Composer takes a bow." *Houston Chronicle*. April 17, 1989.

68. ...float, wild birds, sleeping

Instrumentation: orchestra

Completion Date: six of the seven movements in 1988; one further movement (now movement IV) in 1989

Premiere: 1988 by Joshua Bell with the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra (six of the seven movements)

Commission: supported by grants from Western Michigan University and the Michigan Council for the Arts; dedicated to Yoshimi Takeda and the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra

Performance time: 27 minutes

Notes: As mentioned above, piece was originally premiered with six movements; a seventh movement, which became movement 4, was added for performance the next year. Each of the seven movements is associated with a haiku, which functions as the title of the movement:

- I: The sound of trumpets! Floating on the morning air. Echoes— silver echoes.
- II: Streams of fireflies flow slowly over the deepest, darkest of rivers.
- III: I, old, decrepit. Even mosquitoes Buzz in my ears.
- V: O moon, why must you Inspire my neighbor to chirp All night on a flute!  
[Originally IV]
- VI: A hollow face. The specter of a scarecrow Grows to a deafening din!  
[Originally V]
- VII: The locus-shrill: Precisely a red Paper toy windmill! [Originally VI]

The title comes from a seventh haiku, not set in its entirety in the piece. The haiku

are written by Shiyo, Issa, or the composer himself. Curtis-Smith says that “the ones [haiku] I chose appealed to me because of their brevity, their conciseness, and the fact that each haiku has a certain image that it projects.”

Though the piece is clearly influenced by Japanese culture and contemporary music, the piece is “not an attempt to write ersatz Japanese music,” according to Curtis-Smith, though he goes on to say that “there are certain elements which are akin to Japanese aesthetic principles... the orchestration is probably the most delicate and transparent I have ever tried.” ...*float, wild birds* does not confine itself to only incorporating Japanese ideas; Curtis-Smith’s program notes indicated the use of hocketing, commonly found in indigenous African music.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

“Critics’ choice- the best of ’89: Music has national losses, local gains: Classical music.” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, December 31, 1989.

Doud, Katherine. “Haiku inspired music repeated.” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, November 26, 1989.

Doud, Katherine. “Japanese poetry inspires Kalamazoo composer.” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, January 15, 1989.

69. *Five Pieces for Piano and Percussion*

Instrumentation: duet for piano and percussion

Completion Date: 1987; 1988

Premiere: Darmstadt, Germany

Commission: Darmstadt Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik

Performance time: 19 minutes

Sources:



C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

70. *Songs of Theodore Roethke*

Instrumentation: duet for soprano voice and piano

Completion Date: 1987-1990, depending on the version

Performance time: 9 minutes

Notes: This piece is also known as *Three Songs*, *Six Theodore Roethke Settings*, or *Five*

*Theodore Roethke Settings*. Curtis-Smith reorchestrated and added to the material for baritone voice and chamber ensemble in *The Shimmer of Evil*.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Cope, David and Greg A. Steinke. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*, ed. Charles Hiroshi Garrett. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

71. *Shimmer of Evil*

Instrumentation: baritone vocalist with piano or chamber ensemble (piano, two violins, viola, cello, bass, clarinet, and horn)

Premiere: Sunday, August 13, 1989 by the Fontana Ensemble, Shelbyville, MI

Commission: Fontana Festival, for their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary; supported by a Fellowship and Grant from the Faculty Research and Creative Activities Support Fund at Western Michigan University

Notes: *Shimmer of Evil* includes reorchestrations of *Songs of Theodore Roethke* for baritone voice, rather than soprano, and chamber ensemble. The seven movements (I. Sale II.

Silence III. Night Crow IV. The Shimmer of Evil V. Memory VI. The Adamant VII. My Papa's Waltz) are each a setting of a poem by Theodore Roethke, a Michigan native. Curtis-Smith's program notes discuss in particular the use of piano between the movements; sometimes for rhythmic effect, sometimes alone, sometimes absent entirely from a movement.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Doud, Katherine. "Putting a poet's words to music." *Kalamazoo Gazette*. August 6, 1989.

Doud, Katherine. "Summer sights & sounds: Fontana festival offers them indoors." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, July 9, 1989.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

Pixley, Zaide. "Fontana succeeds with pieces old, brand new, even forgotten." *Kalamazoo Gazette*. August 14, 1989.

72. *Bagatelles*

Instrumentation: solo guitar

Premiere: Ashville, NC

Commission: the New York Concert Artists Guild, for William Kanengiser

Performance time: 12 minutes

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

73. Concerto for Left Hand and Orchestra

Instrumentation: piano and orchestra

Completion Date: 1990

Premiere: 1991 at the Irving Gilmore International Keyboard Festival, by Leon Fleisher and the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra

Commission: by the Irving Gilmore International Keyboard Festival in honor of their first year

Performance time: 30 minutes

Notes: This concerto is a mark of the mutual esteem between Curtis-Smith and Leon Fleisher.

The Gilmore Festival facilitated the commission, but Curtis-Smith stated his admiration for Fleisher from childhood, and Fleisher in turn expressed appreciation for Curtis-Smith's "exceptional writing for the left hand." Fleisher premiered the piece at the Gilmore Festival in 1990, but continued to perform the piece on tours in both the United States and internationally.

The piece marks a development in Curtis-Smith's compositional style. Earlier pieces gravitated toward short forms and rarely attained more than 20-25 minutes; however, a shorter form was inadequate for a concerto of this intricacy. Curtis-Smith makes the same observation in his application for sabbatical leave in 1990; "Most of my music, going back to the beginning of my career as a composer, has been largely sound-oriented, with a preoccupation with small forms; timbre and programmatic depiction have been more important than form and structure." He began investigating formal structures, and "found [himself] gravitating toward the very form [he] had been assiduously avoiding for the past quarter-century: sonata-allegro, or first-movement sonata form.

Curtis-Smith's musical interest at this time was with change-ringing, a technique found primarily in English handbell music and that creates an aural effect that Curtis-Smith employed earlier in his 1976 *Music for Handbells*. In a piece utilizing change-

ringing, pitch patterns vary over a stable rhythmic framework for a striking aural effect. The third movement of the *Concerto* evidences the technique with particular clarity, though traces of it can be found throughout the piece.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Guinn, John. "Concert pianist Leon Fleisher plays one-handed but uses all of his heart." *Detroit Free Press*, March 13, 1994.

Johnson, Lawrence B. "Fleisher glistens in Ravel, Curtis-Smith concertos." *Detroit News*, March 18, 1994.

Remek, Robert Thomas. A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith. Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002.

74. Sextet for Piano and Winds

Instrumentation: piano and woodwind quintet

Completion Date: 1991

Premiere: Dennis Russell Davies conducting the Stuttgart Wind Quintet at the Kammermusiksaal Beethoven-Haus in Bonn, Germany, 1991

Commission: Dennis Russell Davies; the Stuttgart Wind Quintet; the city of Bonn, Germany

Performance time: 20 minutes

Notes: *Sextet* was recorded by the Stuttgart Wind Quintet, conducted by Dennis Russell Davies, on *The Merling Trio Performs Works C. Curtis-Smith* recording. The four movements are I. Easily Flowing; Happy; II. With a quite Joyousness; III. Declamatory; and IV. Brilliant and Ringing.

Curtis-Smith grounded the Sextet heavily in sub-Saharan African rhythms. His program notes for the piece illustrate his use of Ashanti Kete drumming tradition in the structure and use of the melody in the first movement, as well as the Shona vocal

tradition used to design the woodwind parts. In the third and fourth movements, Curtis-Smith makes use again of change-ringing.

Sources:

Curtis-Smith, C. *The Merling Trio Performs Works by C. Curtis-Smith*. The Merling Trio; C. Curtis-Smith (piano); the Stuttgart Wind Quintet, conducted by Dennis Russell Davies. CD Albany Records B000QZWMDC. 1995.

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

*75. The Mystic Trumpeter*

Instrumentation: baritone voice, men's chorus, trumpet, and organ

Completion Date: 1991

Commission: Karel Paukert, organist, on behalf of the Cleveland Museum of Art, in honor of their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary

Performance time: 30 minutes

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Remek, Robert Thomas. "A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith." Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002.

*76. Gold Are My Flowers*

Completion Date: 1992

Commission: Da Camera, Houston, Texas for the Columbus Quincentennial

Premiere: Da Camera, 1992

Performance time: 45 minutes

Notes: In early drafts, the piece was known as *Christopher the Christ-Bearer*. Sergei Luca, director of the Da Camera ensemble in Houston, commissioned the piece to commemorate the 500 year anniversary of Columbus' voyage. Da Camera had performed

*Fantasy Pieces* and liked Curtis-Smith's work, and considered him an appropriate choice for the project. Luca specifically requested that Curtis-Smith include the Native American viewpoint in the piece, rather than simply celebrating Columbus and his "discovery." The piece was intended for performance in 1991, but due to funding issues, the premiere was postponed to 1992.

Structurally, William Albright calls the piece a "cantata-melodrama." The piece is performed unconduted, with all nine members of the orchestra plus the two vocalists are located onstage. The text provides a narrative trajectory, but the lack of traditional staging elements that would be found in something like an opera keep the focus on the music rather than the (potential) spectacle.

Each of the vocalists represents one culture in the historical interaction; the baritone, Christopher Columbus and Western society; and the soprano, Native American culture. "Columbus's" text is drawn from his own historical journal and travel logs, translated into English for the first time in 1991; the soprano sings poetry penned by Chickasaw author and teacher Linda Hogan. When discussing his intention in writing the piece, Curtis-Smith says "It's not a matter of one being right and one being wrong. Maybe they're both right, and maybe they're both wrong... but at the very end... there is a sense of healing."

In spite of the Native American and Spanish texts, the musical inspiration for the piece did not come from either of these cultures. Curtis-Smith's program notes describe the African influences of the piece, particularly in terms of rhythmic devices: he considers the incorporation of these elements a part of his own style. He also defends his decision not to use music from Native American cultures: "There is very little American

Indian music in this piece, and appropriately so. The indigenous music Columbus may or may not have heard in the Bahamas vanished along with the gentle Tainos less than half a century after the initial landfall.”

Unusually for Curtis-Smith’s later work, the piece involves a small electronic component. The soprano soloist is to record ten measures of the piece before the performance; the recording is played back from a balcony, from the back of the auditorium, or from backstage, to imitate the sound of “the soprano herself... singing from a remote location.”

Sources:

Albright, William. “Da Camera presents striking ‘Columbus.’” *Houston Post*, December 7, 1992.

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Doud, Katherine. “No good guys or bad in Columbus cantata.” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, 23 July 1995.

Holmes, Ann. “‘Christopher’ opera captures both sides of historic story.” *Houston Chronicle*, December 8, 1992.

Ward, Charles. “‘Christ-Bearer’ lets views collide in music and text.” *Houston Chronicle*, date unknown (speculated: between December 1 and December 7, 1992).

77. Second Piano Trio (“*The Secret Heart of Sound*”)

Instrumentation: trio for piano, violin, cello

Completion Date: 1992

Premiere: the Merling Trio, Weill Recital Hall, New York, NY, 1993

Commission: the Merling Trio

Performance time: 18 minutes

Notes: The Merling Trio recorded the Second Piano Trio on their 1995 album *The Merling Trio*

*Performs Works by C. Curtis-Smith.* The second movement is based on his own setting of a Theodore Roethke poem in an earlier piece, partially as a “repose from the rhythmic intensity of the outer movements.”

Robert Carl remarks, in reference to the recording of the piece: “What is perhaps most striking is Curtis-Smith’s use of heterophony. The essence of this technique is to take a single melody and have other lines play it simultaneously, with slight variations of rhythm, ornamentation, etc. Out of the differences counterpoint begins to emerge... the technique is always used subtly, always in the service of a larger, nondogmatic musical purpose.” Curtis-Smith’s program notes indicate that purpose; an unabashed portrayal of joy, through the use of African rhythmic structures and melodic devices. He states again in these notes, as he has before on notes for other pieces, that he finds sub-Saharan music some of the most joyous in the world, and he wants the performers to communicate the piece “with the greatest joy and exhilaration!”

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Carl, Robert. Article in *Fanfare*, September/October 1995.

### 78. *African Laughter*

Instrumentation: septet for flute, oboe, clarinet, violin, viola, cello, and piano

Commission: the American Artists Series, Bloomfield Hills, MI, in honor of their 25<sup>th</sup>

anniversary; supported by a grant from The Arts Foundation of Michigan

Performance time: 18-20 minutes

Notes: Three movements: I. Playful, Buoyant; II. Lively, Joyful; III. Brilliant

Sources:



C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Remek, Robert Thomas. A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith. Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002.

79. *Anthem for Piano and Strings*

Instrumentation: piano and chamber orchestra

Completion Date: 1996

Commission: for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Workshops, Graz, Austria

Performance time: 5-6 minutes

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Remek, Robert Thomas. "A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith." Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002.

80. *Sinfonia Concertante*

Instrumentation: orchestra

Completion Date: 1997

Premiere: Friday, March 21, 1997 by the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra with pianist Jon

Kimura Parker; the premiere took place in Holland, MI at the West Ottawa Performing Arts Center

Commission: commissioned in 1995 by the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, in honor of their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary

Recording: One movement of the piece was recorded by the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra in 1997

Notes: The piece has been known both by the listed title above and as the Second Symphony.

The four movements of the piece are based on the four Japanese characters comprising

conductor Yoshimi Takeda's name. *Take* (war, warrior, samurai) is in the first movement, "After the War..." *Da* (rice field) is used in the second, "Ghosts (Rice Field at Phnom Penh)." The third movement, "Smiles," embodies the syllable *yoshi* (goodness, virtue, or smiles) and the fourth, "[And] African Laughter," the syllable *mi* (beauty and laughter).

C. J. Gianakaris of the *Kalamazoo Gazette* found the piece to be "probably the most accessible of all of Curtis-Smith's several commissioned pieces for the orchestra. Atonal music there was, but infinitely more attention seemed to have been given to tonal colors and interesting harmonies." Curtis-Smith felt that it could "be read as a classical four-movement symphonic form," which aligns with his interest in historical formal structures, but also that "from another perspective, Sinfonia Concertante may be seen as four interrelated characteristic pieces with descriptive or programmatic titles" based on the four characters mentioned above. Further, he structured the titles of the four movements so they could be read together as a haiku. Despite the linguistic inspiration, the piece uses little from Japanese musical culture, instead drawing on the music of Curtis-Smith's favorite continent; this time, melodies from Uganda.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Doud, Katherine. "This is dedicated to the one they love." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, March 16, 1997.

Gianakaris, C. J. "KSO, guests match hoop hysteria." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, March 22, 1997.

Kaczmarczyk, Jeffrey. "Curtis-Smith premiere observes Kalamazoo Symphony's 75th year." *Grand Rapids Press*, March 24, 1997.

81. *Masques d'Afrique*

Instrumentation: trio for organ, trumpet, and percussion

Completion Date: 1997

Premiere: Performed by Joan Lippincott at the AGO Convention in Denver, Colorado, June 1998

Commission: the American Guild of Organists, for their Biennial National Convention

Performance time: 20 minutes

Notes: Curtis-Smith borrowed material from his own previous compositions, the Second Symphony and the chamber piece *African Laughter*.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Remek, Robert Thomas. "A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith." Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002.

## 82. *Violin Concerto*

Instrumentation: violin and orchestra

Completion Date: 1998

Premiere: Sergiu Luca, violin, with the ProMusica Chamber Orchestra, Columbus, OH

Commission: ProMusica Chamber Orchestra

Notes: An early version of the Violin Concerto was entitled *Concerto for ProMusica*; some articles use this title.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Remek, Robert Thomas. "A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith." Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002.

Zuck, Barbara. "ProMusica offers double treat with premiere of concertos." *Columbus Dispatch*, March 8, 1999.

## 82.5 "i thank You God for most this amazing"

Instrumentation: tenor voice and piano

Completion date: May 26, 1998

Dedication: to Mary Kathryn Christian on the occasion of her wedding to Joseph Byerwalter

Notes: Here, Curtis-Smith sets e.e. cummings' poem of the same name.

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

### 83. *Collusions*

Collaborator: William Bolcom

Instrumentation: solo piano

Completion Date: 1998

Premiere: James Giles at Western Michigan University, November 3, 1998

Publication Date: 1999, by Edward B. Marks Music

Commission: supported by the Irving S. Gilmore International Keyboard Festival

Performance time: 10 minutes

Notes: *Collusions* was a year-long collaboration between Curtis-Smith and William Bolcom, begun while they were sharing an office during Curtis-Smith's second time as Visiting Professor at the University of Michigan, during the 1996-1997 academic year. Each would write a handful of measures, then pass the manuscript off to the other. Curtis-Smith says that they "tended to leave [their] contribution open-ended, usually ending in the middle of a phrase, to avoid sectionalizing the piece, very much like ending in the middle of a sentence." Bolcom adds that he thinks that "in *Collusions* it will be very difficult for people to tell who's doing what at any point." Bolcom was responsible for the titles of the five movements: I. Get Up; II. Moonlight on Ice; III. Snippets (some short, some long); IV. Sarabande Mortelle; and IV. Fuzzywuzzy's Serenade.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Sanford, James. "Composers combine talents on 'Collusions.'" *Kalamazoo Gazette*, November 1, 1998.

84. *Twelve Etudes for Piano*

Instrumentation: solo piano

Completion Date: 2000

Premiere: Seven of the twelve etudes were premiered by Lori Sims at Alice Tully Hall in New York City, September 2000; the composer later performed the full set at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo

Commission: Supported by funds from the Faculty Research and Creative Activities Support Fund, Western Michigan University

Performance time: 38 minutes

Notes: Curtis-Smith describes the composition as a "suite of twelve movements, rather than a loose anthology" but allows for performance of smaller sets. Four of the *Etudes* were chosen as part of the repertoire for the eleventh Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in Fort Worth, TX, for 2001.

The piece was described by Bernard Holland in a *New York Times* review as reminiscent of Debussy and Chopin, and composer Ned Rorem finds them to be "real music... inventive and necessary."

Curtis-Smith dedicates the piece to Robert Harvey.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Holland, Bernard. "A Teacher Shows Herself to Be a Thoughtful Student, Too." *New*

*York Times*, September 20, 2000.

Remek, Robert Thomas. "A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith." Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002.

85. Trio for Violin, Clarinet, and Piano

Instrumentation: trio for clarinet, piano, and violin

Completion Date: 2000

Commission: the Verdehr Trio

Performance time: 18 minutes

Notes: One of the movement titles, "Largo with a Twist," was suggested by Kathy McCoy;

Curtis-Smith had initially thought to call it Largo with Unexpected Ending, but preferred McCoy's idea. One of the movements was reorchestrated for marimba and vibraphone in the second movement of *More African Laughter*.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Moonert, Judy, in conversation with the author. February 15, 2019.

Remek, Robert Thomas. A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith. Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002.

86. *A Farewell... (Les adieux)*

Instrumentation: sextet for horn, string quartet, and piano

Completion Date: 2001

Commission: the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition; Fontana Chamber Arts; the 33<sup>rd</sup>

International Horn Symposium; the Meir Rimon Commissioning Assistance Program of the International Horn Society

Performance time: 20-23 minutes

Notes: Curtis-Smith began work on *A Farewell* in July 2000, intending it to be for French horn and piano trio. Due to the stipulation of a grant he received from the Barlow Endowment, however, he changed the instrumentation to horn, string quartet, and piano.

*Farewell* was created in honor of hornist Neill Sanders, KSO director Yoshimi Takeda, and WMU professor Don Bullock. Robert Remek describes the piece as “programmatically and personal” and goes on to illustrate how each of the four movements represents a different part of the grieving process for the two dedicatees who had passed away. It was recorded by John Stites of Aracadia Recording in 2001.

The score includes a note at the beginning about the work’s “motto;” Curtis-Smith cites two mottos similar to his own by Beethoven and Ligeti as “not this, (except in memory)... nor this” before notating the two beginning bars of his own theme. Before the first movement, Curtis-Smith quotes Alfred de Vigny’s “Le Cor.”

Sources:

Curtis-Smith, C. *A Farewell... (Les Adieux)*. Fontana Chamber Arts. Recorded by John Stites in Shelbyville, MI, August 18, 2001. Edited August 2007.

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Remek, Robert Thomas. *A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002.

87. [Double] Concerto for Violin, Piano, and Strings

Instrumentation: violin and piano soloists with chamber string orchestra

Completion Date: 2005

Premiere: May 1, 2006 in Kalamazoo by members of the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra with soloists Elina Vähälä (violin) and Ralf Góthoni (piano; Gilmore artist for 1994)

Commission: the Irving S. Gilmore International Keyboard Festival; the Kuopio Symphony

Orchestra of Finland; an anonymous donor from Kalamazoo

Notes: Curtis-Smith corresponded regularly with Vähälä and Góthoni while writing the four-movement concerto throughout 2005. Góthoni and Vähälä were invited to participate in the Festival by Daniel Gustin, director of the Gilmore Festival, and it was Góthoni who suggested giving the commission to Curtis-Smith. Góthoni wanted a piece that showcased both his performance skill and his ability to conduct from the piano while playing; that would also include his wife Vähälä's virtuosic performing; and that was written for chamber, rather than full, orchestra. The Northwest Chamber Orchestra was initially contacted to play the chamber orchestra parts, but canceled their performance due to funding issues; members of the Kalamazoo Symphony stepped in instead. Curtis-Smith says of the piece, and of contemporary music on the whole, "People have the impression that new music is either experimental and difficult to listen to or very commercial and pop-oriented... I see myself in between, writing music that's complex and challenging that also can be understood and be accessible."

The Concerto was recorded at the premiere.

Sources:

Curtis-Smith, C. *Concerto for violin, piano, and strings*. Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, Ralf Góthoni, conductor and piano, and Elina Vähälä, violin. Recorded by John Stites, Arcadia Recording, May 1, 2006.

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Remek, Robert Thomas. "A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith." Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002.

Wedel, Mark. "Bankrupt orchestra cancels Gilmore shows." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, March 17, 2006.

Wedel, Mark. "Never Before Heard: Commissioned works bring sparkle to Gilmore Festival." *Kalamazoo Gazette*.



Wedel, Mark. "Taylor, quartet replace orchestra in Gilmore lineup." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, March 25, 2006.

88. *Tulips*

Instrumentation: soprano and piano quintet

Completion Date: 2007

Commission: Fontana Chamber Arts for their 2007 Summer Festival

Notes: *Tulips* is a setting of the Sylvia Plath poem of the same name.

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

89. "Rube Goldberg Variation" in *13 Ways of Looking at the Goldberg*

Instrumentation: solo piano

Publication Date: 2007

Premiere: May 2, 2004 by Gilbert Kalish as part of the Gilmore Keyboard Festival

Commission: the Irving S. Gilmore International Keyboard Festival

Performance time: 50 minutes

Notes: *13 Ways of Looking at the Goldberg* represents the reinterpretation of Bach's *Goldberg* variations by twelve contemporary composers, including Curtis-Smith. Each composer wrote one movement, without any consultation with the other composers, and the short pieces were compiled together into the fifteen movements now present in the full piece (two variations, plus a reprise, are by J. S. Bach himself).

Source:

Multiple authors. *13 Ways of Looking at the Goldberg*. New York: C. F. Peters Corporation, 2007.

90. *More African Laughter*

Instrumentation: duet for percussion (vibraphone and marimba)

Completion Date: 2008

Premiere: Coalescence Percussion Duo (Judy Moonert and Greg Secor) at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention, Austin, TX, 2008.

Commission: Coalescence Percussion Duo

Performance time: 9 minutes

Notes: At the time of his death, Curtis-Smith had written two movements of *More African Laughter*: I. Quietly Happy and II. Jauntily, with Congenial Good Spirits. His colleague Judy Moonert, half of the Coalescence Percussion Duo, says that Curtis-Smith planned to write a third movement at some point, but had not, to her knowledge, done so at the time of his death. The piece clearly reflects Curtis-Smith's interest in sub-Saharan indigenous music; he describes the rhythmic displacement as being modeled on Ashanti Kete drumming, native to Ghana.

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

Coalescence Percussion Duo. Notes to Alternations, CD and mp3. CD Baby B01BIF9XHG: 2015.

Moonert, Judy, in conversation with the author. February 15, 2019.

91. "*O Wondrous Singer!*"-- (*A Fragment*)

Instrumentation: soprano, string quartet, and piano

Completion Date: 2008

Notes: The text for *O Wondrous Singer* comes from Walt Whitman's "When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloom'd."

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

92. Nocturne

Instrumentation: solo piano

Completion Date: 2010

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

93. “Dem Ewigen entgegenschweigt”

Instrumentation: piano and string quartet

Completion Date: 2010

Performance time: 5 minutes, 20 seconds

Notes: “Dem Ewigen entgegenschweigt” was inspired by poet Ranier Maria Rilke’s “Das ist die Sehnsucht;” the title comes from the poem’s last line, which Curtis-Smith translates as “Silently encounters eternity” or, alternately, “Meets the eternal with silence.” Curtis-Smith wrote in memory of James Avery.

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

94. *Fanfare Lyrique*

Instrumentation: orchestra

Completion Date: 2010

Premiere: 2013

Notes: Curtis-Smith’s own copy of the piece notes “2010” above his name for the date of composition, and as well as “prem 2013.”

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

95. *The Goldberg Waltz* (undated)

Instrumentation: solo piano

Notes: This one-page piece is for Brian Connelly.

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

96. *Intermezzo* (undated)

Instrumentation: solo piano

Notes: This one-page piece is for Brian Connelly.

Source:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

### A: Theses, Dissertations, and Book Chapters

The Theses, Dissertations, and Book Chapters section contains these three types of materials; entries in encyclopedias and reference works are included as book chapters.

- A1. Arnold, Corliss Richard. *Organ Literature: A Comprehensive Survey: Volume II: Biographical Catalog*. Third edition. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1995.

Arnold mentions Curtis-Smith briefly in this massive survey of composers for organ and their relevant compositions. A short paragraph of biographical details includes an overview of Curtis-Smith's education, professional accomplishments, and awards. Though Curtis-Smith wrote several pieces that include organ, the only one Arnold mentions is *Masquerades*, for solo organ.

- A2. Cope, David and Greg A. Steinke. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*, ed. Charles Hiroshi Garrett. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Cope and Steinke provide a short professional biography of Curtis-Smith, focusing primarily on his awards and well-known compositions, as well as a description of his musical style based primarily on *Rhapsodies*, and a catalog of works.

- A3. Hertzog, Christian. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins. Chicago: St. James Press, 1992.

In addition to a brief biography and a fairly exhaustive list of Curtis-Smith's work, Hertzog includes in this entry a short interview with Curtis-Smith as well as a description of his compositional development. Curtis-Smith's comments are primarily in regard to his focus on color and humor and the ways in which those ideas are realized in his pieces. Hertzog's discussion of Curtis-Smith centers around *Rhapsodies* and the progress it represented but also speaks to several other phases of Curtis-Smith's writing.

- A4. Jablonski, Edward. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O. B." *The Encyclopedia of American Music*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1981.

Jablonski limits his biographical data to one short paragraph focusing primarily on Curtis-Smith's education and career. The rest of the entry is devoted to a listing of Curtis-Smith's notable compositions to that point.

- A5. Kennedy, Michael. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis." *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, ed. Joyce Bourne. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Kennedy concisely describes Curtis-Smith's education and career, including the development of bowed piano, and lists a few of the composer's better known pieces.

- A6. Randel, Don Michael (ed.). "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O.(Otto) B.(Bismarck)." *The Harvard Biographical Dictionary of Music*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996.

Randel's one paragraph entry mentions little more than the barest facts of Curtis-Smith's life; the included information covers his education, employment, and a handful of his pieces.

- A7. Remek, Robert Thomas. *A Study of the Organ Solo and Ensemble Works of Curtis Curtis-Smith*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002.

Remek's doctoral dissertation, submitted in pursuit of his D.M.A. in keyboard performance, examines six of Curtis-Smith's pieces: *Masquerades*, *Variations on "Amazing Grace,"* *The Mystic Trumpeter*, and *Masques d'Afrique* in depth, and with a slightly more cursory eye, *Gargoyles* and *On a Ground by Henry Purcell*. The dissertation includes, in addition to analyses of the aforementioned pieces, a short biography of Curtis-Smith, a description of his additions to the field of organ repertoire, and performance and pedagogy concerns in the six pieces discussed.

- A8. Slonimsky, Nicolas. "Curtis-Smith, Curtis O(tto) B(ismarck)." *20<sup>th</sup> Century Classical Musicians*, ed. Laura Kuhn. New York: Schirmer Books, 1997.

Slonimsky's summary of Curtis-Smith is brief, but mentions his numerous awards and the development of bowed piano. His entry also includes the usual catalog of compositions, though this is somewhat more abbreviated than in other reference works.

## B: Reviews of Performances and Recordings

The “Reviews” section includes any mention of Curtis-Smith and his work found published in newspapers or other informal periodicals.

B1. “A hometown touch.” *Kalamazoo Gazette*. April 3, 1988.

Most of the article centers around William Bolcom’s recent Pulitzer Prize for music, but mentions the composer’s connection with Kalamazoo- Curtis-Smith, who had premiered four of Bolcom’s *Twelve New Etudes for Piano* in 1986.

B2. Albright, William. “Da Camera presents striking ‘Columbus.’” *Houston Post*, December 7, 1992.

On December 5, 1992, the Da Camera ensemble presented Curtis-Smith’s *Christopher the Christ-Bearer* in a themed concert entitled *Beyond Columbus*. Albright provided a fair description of the piece itself without passing judgement, except perhaps to be supportive of this less-than-flattering portrait of Columbus, but was not impressed with either of the two featured vocalists, particularly Carolann Page.

B3. Baron, Jeanne, ed. “Concert to recognize 40-year career.” *Western News*, 35 no. 2 (2008): 2.

Western Michigan University’s internal newspaper announces the upcoming concert honoring Curtis-Smith’s 40<sup>th</sup> year teaching at WMU and briefly lists the performers as well as touching on Curtis-Smith’s own accomplishments. Though the article’s author is not specified, contributors to the paper are listed: Tonya R. Hernandez, Deanne Molinari, Thomas A. Myers, Cheryl P. Roland, and Mark E. Schwerin.

B4. Berggren, John. “NSC Talent.” *Aberdeen American-News*, 19 November 1967.

Berggren laments the poor attendance at a Curtis-Smith concert in 1967. At the time, Curtis-Smith was teaching at Northern State University, where Berggren was Chairman of the Division of Fine Arts. Berggren points out that Curtis-Smith was well regarded elsewhere at the time, and chastises the community for not appreciating the talent in their midst.

B5. Block, Steven. “Frightening Virtuosity.” *Da Capo*, November 9, 1983.

Curtis-Smith’s chamber ensemble work *Sundry Dances* was included on a Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble concert that took place the week before the publication of the article, possibly as far back as Halloween of 1983. As is characteristic of Curtis-Smith’s style at this point, *Sundry Dances* touches on a variety of classical and vernacular traditions with general effectiveness, though Block felt that the piece lost energy in the middle, and that Curtis-Smith sometimes “played the audience for laughs.”

B6. Buell, Richard. “High seriousness, high spaciness and easy listening.” *Boston Globe*, 29

January 1991.

Pianist Randall Hodgkinson played Curtis-Smith's *Partita* for a concert hosted by Boston's Musica Viva. Buell expressed the opinion that the piece lacked originality by following the 70s new music tradition of achieving then-non-standard timbres, generally inside the piano, but found that the piece had a "sense of sustained atmosphere."

B6.5 Carl, Robert. "Classical Recordings." *Fanfare*, September/October 1995.

Carl reviews the album released by the Merling Trio in 1994, consisting entirely of music by Curtis-Smith- *Second Piano Trio*, *Fantasy Pieces*, *Sweetgrass Trio*, and *Sextet for Piano and Winds*. The "star of the collection," Carl asserts, is the *Second Piano Trio*, but he finds Curtis-Smith's compositions to be open, imaginative, and compelling. The relatively lengthy review takes time to discuss Curtis-Smith's use of heterophony, noting that the differences in voicing compile into an overarching musical structure. Though he does take issue with a few of Curtis-Smith's compositional choices, Carl finds the performances excellent, the album compelling, and the composer talented.

B7. Charnley, Anne L. "Etcetera." *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin*, 28 April 1991.

Charnley makes a series of jokes based on the names of Curtis-Smith's residences, playing them off the names of his compositions; the article also touches on the upcoming performance of *Concerto for Left Hand and Piano* by Leon Fleisher, reported by Curtis-Smith's cousin Calista.

B8. Charnley, Anne L. "Etcetera." *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin*, 3 September 1995.

The "Etcetera" section of the *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin* shares reader-submitted local news. This brief write-up includes a few personal details about Curtis-Smith as well as a few professional ones, in a celebration of the success of a Walla Walla native.

B9. Christian, Jill. "cummings would've approved" in the *Kalamazoo Gazette*, Tuesday, August 30, 1988.

Christian disputes in this article a previous unfavorable assessment of Curtis-Smith's music by writer Chisholm Gentry (refer to B43 for Gentry's article). She supports the text choice for *chansons innocentes* and Curtis-Smith's compositional skill.

B10. Collins, Philip. "Spotlight: Cabrillo Festival opens with a bang." *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, August 18, 1984.

Collins mentions the performance of GAS! at the Cabrillo Festival only briefly, calling it a "cornucopia of Americana." Curtis-Smith's copy of the article includes several paragraphs from another article on the same topic, presumably from the same paper,



given Curtis-Smith's generally meticulous attention to detail when recording the dates of articles and names of periodicals. This second text is slightly more detailed, citing Curtis-Smith's compositional dexterity in handling tempo, meter, and tonality.

- B11. "Critics' choice- the best of '89: Music has national losses, local gains: Classical music." *Kalamazoo Gazette*: December 31, 1989.

Most of this article discusses national and local music news, including an announcement of the incipient Gilmore International Keyboard Festival, due to begin in the summer of 1991. Relevant to Curtis-Smith is the inclusion of the premiere of his piece "...float, wild birds, sleeping" by Joshua Bell and the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra in a list of the "top five" concerts of the year, as chosen by critics Zaide Pixley, Matt Steele, Roland Stycos, C.J. Gianakaris, and Katherine Doud.

- B12. Croan, Robert. "Ensemble features versatile violinist." *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*: October 31, 1983.

In a program comprised entirely of modern music, violinist Sidney Harth performed Curtis-Smith's *Sundry Dances*, along with pieces by David Berlin, Paul Hindemith, Charles Wuorinen, and Rober Bourland. Croan describes *Dances* as having "barbed, black humor" and representing death, but in spite of or perhaps because of that, found the piece appealing.

- B13. Cunningham, Carl. "Da Camera's benign take on Columbus." *Post*, November 29, 1992.

The year-delayed premiere of *Christopher the Christ-Bearer* (later, *Gold Are My Flowers*) prompted Cunningham to write about not only that upcoming event, but about the development of the piece. He includes librettist Linda Hogan's participation in the project as well as Curtis-Smith's own thoughts on its development. Unusually, he also discusses the instrumentation- he cites Curtis-Smith as saying the instrumental combinations are standard combinations, in spite of the nine-player chamber orchestra including a pianist and battery of percussion instruments.

- B14. "Curtis O. B. Curtis-Smith." *American Artists Series 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*, 1994-1995.

The American Artists Series Chamber Players performed Curtis-Smith's *African Laughter* on February 12, 1995 as part of the AAS 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Series of concerts. This single-page biography (plus a full-page grayscale photo) announces the concert, gives a brief overview of Curtis-Smith's career and accomplishments, and quotes his own writing about *African Laughter*.

- B15. "Curtis-Smith works performed here and abroad." *Western News*, April 13, 1995.

This announcement in the Western Michigan University campus newspaper detailed Curtis-Smith's \$7,000 grant from the Arts Foundation of Michigan and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs and the resulting orchestral work, *African Laughter*,

which was premiered by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra at the Cranbrook Academy of Arts Museum in February of 1995. It also announces the West German Radio Orchestra performance and recording of *The Great American Symphony* in March 1995, and preempts the upcoming concert with Leon Fleisher performing *Concerto for Left Hand*.

- B16. Czuchna-Curl, Ardyce. "My Place: Frank Lloyd Wright-designed home has the classic hallmarks." Special to the *Kalamazoo Gazette*, November 27, 2011.  
[https://www.mlive.com/living/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2011/11/my\\_place\\_frank\\_lloyd\\_wright-de.html](https://www.mlive.com/living/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2011/11/my_place_frank_lloyd_wright-de.html) accessed 2/22/19 at 10:25 a.m.

Czuchna-Curl's column "My Place" focuses on noteworthy homes in the Kalamazoo area. In this article, she discusses the Frank Lloyd Wright home that Curtis-Smith and wife Kathy purchased in 2002. Czuchna-Curl addresses original intention of the design as well as the renovations Curtis-Smith and Kathy did to the then-50-year-old home.

- B17. Davies, Dennis Russell. "Artist's Life." *Keynote* (WNCN magazine), 1984.

Though most of the article centers around Charles Ives, brief mention is made at the end of the article of Curtis-Smith's status as an inheritor of Ives' musical legacy.

- B18. Henry, Derrick: "Atlanta Virtuosi Offers Spirited Performance" in *The Atlanta Journal*, April 18, 1989.

Derrick reviews an Atlanta Virtuosi concert that took place on Sunday, April 16, 1989 at Cannon Chapel; it included *Fantasy Pieces*, performed by the composer with violinist Juan Ramirez. Derrick describes the piece as refined (in comparison to other pieces on the program), rhapsodic, and romantic.

- B19. Devoe, E. David. "Reviews: Classical." *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel*, March 29, 1980.

Devoe makes mention of Curtis-Smith's *Masquerades*, performed by William Albright, on his review of CRI SD 409.

- B20. Donoghue, John D. "New Arts Trio Gives Fascinating Program." *Burlington (Vt.) Free Press*, August 7, 1985.

The New Arts Trio performed Curtis-Smith's *Sweet Grass* [sic] at their August 6 concert taking place at the McCarthy Arts Center at St. Michael's College. Donoghue's entire assessment of the piece is that it is a "novelty" that "is amusing with hints of hoedown, blues and rock, but it takes a long time to get started."

- B21. Doud, Katherine. "Bolcom, Pulitzer-winning composer, is nonchalant- but his fans aren't" in the *Kalamazoo Gazette*. Date unknown.

Though Doud focuses on Bolcom's Pulitzer win, she includes quotations by Curtis-Smith in regard to Bolcom's life and work, as well as a discussion of Curtis-Smith's

participation in Bolcom's compositions- namely, his premiere of the four *Etudes*.

- B22. Doud, Katherine. "Brilliant Bell rings out with KSO" in the *Kalamazoo Gazette*. Saturday, January 21, 1989.

This article is a review of a concert taking place on Friday, January 20, 1989 in Miller Auditorium, Kalamazoo, Michigan. The concert, the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra with guest violinist Joshua Bell, was the premiere of *...float, wild birds, sleeping*. The work is described as ethereal, delicate, and contained, and goes on to describe some of the specific textual evocations of the orchestra, and contrasts the piece with *Great American Symphony*, another of Curtis-Smith's pieces that the KSO premiered.

- B23. Doud, Katherine. "'Celebration' a chance to compose for many." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, May 15, 1986.

Doud discusses Curtis-Smith's piece *Celebration*, a symphonic work commissioned by The Upjohn Co. to celebrate their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The piece was formally commissioned by Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra director Yoshimi Takeda at the prompting of The Upjohn Co., and was premiered and recorded by the ensemble in 1985.

- B24. Doud, Katherine. "'Concerto' will be performed by DSO." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, March 13, 1994.

Doud's article anticipates the Detroit Symphony Orchestra concert scheduled to perform Curtis-Smith's *Concerto for Left Hand and Orchestra* with soloist Leon Fleisher March 17-20. She takes the opportunity to describe some of Fleisher's other performances of the work, including the world premiere of the work with the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra in 1991 and an upcoming concert in Tokyo.

- B25. Doud, Katherine. "Curtis-Smith's music and e.e. cummings' words inspire singer" in the *Kalamazoo Gazette*, Sunday, August 14, 1988.

Doud takes a preemptive look at the concert on Wednesday, August 17, 1988 concert in which soprano Candace Goetz and pianist Phyllis Rappeport would perform Curtis-Smith's *chansons innocentes*. Goetz is unequivocally complimentary of Curtis-Smith's composition and looked forward to performing it.

- B26. Doud, Katherine. "Haiku inspired music repeated." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, November 26, 1989.

Here, Doud looks ahead to a second performance of *...float, wild birds, sleeping* by the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, this time with one additional movement that had been completed since the premiere earlier the same year. The concert was scheduled to take place at 8:00 p.m. on November 26 in the Dalton Center Recital Hall on the University of Michigan's campus.

- B27. Doud, Katherine. "Hearing music 'hot off the presses.'" *Kalamazoo Gazette*, October 10, 1986.

At the time of publication, Curtis-Smith was scheduled to perform William Bolcom's *Twelve New Etudes* in the premiere of four of the twelve movements. His performance was part of an all-piano "Faculty Showcase" concert scheduled to take place on October 12, 1986. Curtis-Smith also announced his intention to play another movement of a Bolcom work entitled "Knock-stuck," part of *Three Dance Portraits*.

- B28. Doud, Katherine. "Japanese poetry inspires Kalamazoo composer" in the *Kalamazoo Gazette*. Sunday, January 15, 1989.

Doud, in addition to discussing the upcoming premiere of *...float, wild birds, sleeping* spends time on Curtis-Smith's creative process. She makes mention of Curtis-Smith's preparation for writing the piece, including his reading of "literally hundreds" of haiku before choosing the four used in his settings, plus writing two himself for a total of six movements (at that point). Curtis-Smith describes his work as one of the most delicate and transparent orchestrations he attempted up to that point. That concert marked the third premiere of his work by the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra.

- B29. Doud, Katherine. "Local composer's work to open Gilmore fest." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, January 13, 1990.

Doud addresses Curtis-Smith's piece *Concerto for Left Hand and Orchestra*, commissioned for the Irving S. Gilmore International Keyboard Festival. The piece was to be premiered on April 27, 1991 by pianist Leon Fleisher. In addition to a brief discussion of the piece, Doud mentions other compositions by Curtis-Smith in the works—the violin concerto, a piece for the Cleveland Museum, and a piece for piano and wind quintet.

- B30. Doud, Katherine. "No good guys or bad in Columbus cantata." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, July 23, 1995.

Doud sheds a more personal light on Curtis-Smith's compositional process for *Gold Are My Flowers*, including quotes from Curtis-Smith about his change in attitude toward Christopher Columbus, while including the contributions of Native American librettist Linda Hogan. She also announces the upcoming Fontana Festival concert, 30 July 1995, at which *Gold Are My Flowers* would be performed.

- B31. Doud, Katherine. "Putting a poet's words to music." *Kalamazoo Gazette*. August 6, 1989.

*The Shimmer of Evil* was premiered the Sunday following the publication of this article (August 13, 1989) by the Fontana Ensemble at the Art Emporium in Shelbyville. Doud describes the piece: a setting of seven or more of Theodore Roethke's poems, commissioned to celebrate the Fontana Ensemble's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. William Bolcom is credited with introducing Curtis-Smith to the work of Roethke. At the point of this article

and the premiere, seven of the poems were finished, but Curtis-Smith intended to set a further 4-5 during his summer vacation. A list of the (prospective) performers, including the composer himself, is appended to the article.

- B32. Doud, Katherine: "Summer sights & sounds: Fontana festival offers them indoors." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, July 9, 1989.

Doud looks ahead to a variety of concerts scheduled for the summer, including a performance of *The Shimmer of Evil* on August 13 as part of the Fontana Festival. Curtis-Smith was scheduled to perform, and his photo is included with the article.

- B33. Doud, Katherine. "This is dedicated to the one they love." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, March 16, 1997.

Curtis-Smith was commissioned in 1995 to write a piece celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra. The ensemble premiered the piece on March 21, 1997 in honor of the retirement of long time director Yoshimi Takeda, about whose name the four movements of the piece are based.

- B34. Doud, Katherine. "Top chamber trio here to perform local man's work." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, March 16, 1986.

Doud preemptively discusses the upcoming New Arts Trio concert, scheduled to take place on Thursday, March 20, 1986 in Dalton Center. Among other pieces, the trio played Curtis-Smith's *Sweetgrass*, and the article examines the initial composition of the piece for the aforementioned trio by commission in 1982, for a premiere in 1983 at the Eastman School of Music.

- B35. Doud, Katherine. "WMU's Curtis-Smith pleases New York critics with 'Fantasy.'" *Kalamazoo Gazette*, November 22, 1987.

Curtis-Smith performed of *Fantasy Pieces* at a concert in October 1987 at New York City's Town Hall. The performance, as well as the pieces, received a positive reception from New York critics, according to Doud.

- B36. "Downbeats & Upbeats." *Marks and Remarks* 10, no. 1 (2008), 2.

*Marks and Remarks*, the news publication of the Edward B. Marks Music Company, announces the premiere of Curtis-Smith's *Tulips* in July of 2007. It also mentioned the other pieces featured on that concert, *A Farewell... (Les Adieux)* and *Civil War Song Cycle*.

- B37. "Ex-resident active composer." *Walla Walla Union Bulletin*, December 14, 1975.

In a clear expression of hometown pride, this article lists Curtis-Smith's notable accomplishments, including prizes, awards, and performances. It also mentions his

current sabbatical, during which time he was “back home” in Walla Walla to visit his mother and work on four new compositions.

- B38. Foss, Cassie. “40 Years of Music: Concert celebrates composer Curtis-Smith.” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, date unknown (shortly before September 20, 2008).

Foss announces the upcoming Western Michigan University concert featuring entirely pieces by Curtis-Smith. The composer played on two of the pieces and students and faculty performed the rest. In addition to the description of the concert, Foss includes some “fun facts” about Curtis-Smith below the main body of the article.

- B39. Gazette Entertainment Staff. “PS: Awards, Awards.” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, October 2, 1994.

This brief but sparkling endorsement of Curtis-Smith lists and describes his recent awards and accomplishments.

- B40. Gazette Entertainment Staff. “PS: Curtis-Smith premiere.” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, February 5, 1995.

The Gazette Staff informs readers that Curtis-Smith’s *African Laughter* would be premiered in Cranbrook’s Kingswood Auditorium on February 12, adding the piece’s commission for the celebration of the American Artists Series’ 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the \$7,000 grant that provided funding for the project.

- B41. Gazette Entertainment Staff. “PS: Merling Trio on CD.” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, April 23, 1995.

This short write-up announces the release of the Merling Trio’s “The Merling Trio Performs Works by C. Curtis-Smith,” a recording featuring exclusively Curtis-Smith’s works. Staff contributors are listed as Katherine Doud, Joyce Pines, Tom Chmielewski and Margaret De Ritter.

- B42. Gentry, Chisholm. “Chamber music season closes on a Kalamazoo composer’s notes.” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, March 21, 1986.

Published after the March 20 concert, in this review Gentry is complimentary to the skill of the performers but indifferent to the programming. Though his reviews are often ambiguous about Curtis-Smith, he provides a fairly detailed account of *Sweetgrass*, including his observations from the score, and generally speaks positively of it.

- B43. Gentry, Chisholm. “Soprano sparkles but new work lacks luster.” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, August 18, 1988.

Gentry reviews of the August 17, 1988 concert, part of the Fontana Festival in Kalamazoo, with vocalist Candace Goetz and pianist Phyllis Rappeport. Gentry complimented both Goetz’ voice and Curtis-Smith’s compositional skill, but disapproved

of the choice of text, feeling that the e.e. cummings poems in question were some of the poet's more inferior works.

- B44. Gianakaris, C. J. "Fontana showcases musical exploration of Columbus' journey." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, July 31, 1995.

*Gold Are My Flowers*, Curtis-Smith's cantata on the impact of Christopher Columbus on the American continent, was performed as part of the 1995 Fontana Festival taking place on July 30 of the same year in Kalamazoo, MI. The article details the performers participating in the chamber ensemble as well as the emotional impact of the difficult subject matter and "sometimes painful intensity of the contemporary score."

- B45. Gianakaris, C. J. "KSO, guests match hoop hysteria." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, March 22, 1997.

After the concert on March 21, 1997, Gianakaris writes in detail about Curtis-Smith's commissioned piece, *Sinfonia Concertante*. He spends a few paragraphs discussing the ideas behind the piece, then the general characteristics of each of the four movements, before moving on to discuss the other pieces performed on the concert.

- B46. Gianakaris, C. J. "Merling Trio performs rousing 'Second Piano Trio.'" *Kalamazoo Gazette*, April 16, 1993.

Though it was only one of three pieces on the program, Gianakaris spends most of this article discussing the world premiere performance of Curtis-Smith's *Second Piano Trio* on a Merling Trio concert taking place on April 15, 1993. The piece met with Gianakaris's approval, though they expressed slight reservations about the third movement.

- B47. Glackin, William. "A Classical Guitar Concert of Diversity, Invention, and Beauty." *Sacramento Bee*, November 3, 1982.

Glackin mentions Curtis-Smith's *Great American Guitar Solo* as played by Michael Lorimer on November 1, 1982 at California State University, Sacramento, as part of the Festival of New American Music. Most of the article focused on Lorimer's performance of other pieces, all published since 1950.

- B48. Goodman, Peter. "Bolcom: Composer of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century." *Newsday*, October 14, 1987.

Goodman focuses on William Bolcom, as both a composer and a performer, but the context is a concert, part of a series called "Composers and Company," taking place at Town Hall in New York City on Monday, October 12, 1987. The concert involved compositions and performances by Bolcom, Curtis-Smith, and William Albright, with Bolcom serving as narrator. Curtis-Smith and violinist Renata Knific performed *Fantasy Pieces* to general acclaim.

- B49. Guinn, John. "Concert pianist Leon Fleisher plays one-handed but uses all of his heart."

*Detroit Free Press*, March 13, 1994. Curtis-Smith's copy from the Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 8, folder 21.

Guinn announces Leon Fleisher's upcoming piano concert, at which Curtis-Smith's *Concerto for Left Hand* would be performed. He discusses the history of left-hand piano pieces, as well as Fleisher's own attitude toward Curtis-Smith, which is overall very positive. The admiration goes in both directions, as well- Guinn describes Curtis-Smith's regard for Fleisher dating back to Curtis-Smith's own childhood. Curtis-Smith's copy of the article includes a handwritten inscription from an unidentified person who knew Fleisher.

- B50. Guinn, John. "Single-handedly, pianist Fleisher succeeds with two concertos." *Detroit Free Press*, March 18, 1994.

Of particular note in Guinn's article is that Curtis-Smith attended the concert on March 17 in Detroit to see Leon Fleisher perform his *Concerto for Left Hand and Orchestra*. Guinn found Curtis-Smith's piece interesting, describing it as "predicated on the use of... bell sounds emerging mostly from brass, winds, strings and piano," but found the timbres monotonous by the third movement.

- B51. "Guitarist to open orchestra season." *Sunday Star-News* (Wilmington, NC), October 9, 1988.

This article briefly announces the upcoming concert on Tuesday, August 11 by the Wilmington Symphony Orchestra, featuring the premiere of Curtis-Smith's *Songs and Cantillations* with guitar soloist Rob Nathanson.

- B52. Heintz, Diane. "Curtis-Smith's newest work given premiere performance." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, March 14, 1981.

Heintz describes Curtis-Smith's chamber piece *Sundry Dances*, performed on March 13, 1981 at Western Michigan University, as an expansion of ideas first introduced in the composer's organ solo *Masquerades*. Several movements are reworkings of sections of *Masquerades*, and the other movements contain stylistic allusions, though often less explicitly stated. Of particular note was the fusion of jazz and classical elements found throughout the score.

- B53. Heintz, Diane. "Curtis-Smith's power as a performer intact." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, February 24, 1983.

Heintz addresses the dichotomy of Curtis-Smith's two musical roles- performer and composer- regarding him as equally talented in both fields, but pursuing each to the exclusion of the other. She implies that Curtis-Smith's concert at Oakland Recital Hall on February 19, 1983 marks the musicians move from a period of composition to a period of performance. On this particular concert, Curtis-Smith did not play any of his own compositions- instead, he played works of Bartok, Debussy, and Ravel composed



between 1908 and 1920. Phyllis Rappaport joined Curtis-Smith for one of the pieces, Ravel's *Mother Goose*. Heintz found Curtis-Smith's playing evocative, colorful, and imaginative.

- B54. Henahan, Donal. "Maverick Composers Make Their Own Choices." *New York Times*, December 14, 1986.

Henahan mentions Curtis-Smith as an heir of Charles Ives in terms of the American musical idiom that includes quotation of tunes and idioms, attention to the physical aspect of performance, distrust of formal systems, idealism, pragmatism, indeterminacy, and technological focus. He uses Curtis-Smith to make the argument that though the Ives tradition seems to be superseded by the "Paine" tradition (more conservative, less "American"), the awards given to Curtis-Smith indicate that there is at least a strong current of respect for the Ivesian tradition.

- B55. Hicken. "The Newest Music." *American Record Guide*, November/December 1995.

Though this review encompasses 15 separate albums, Hicken takes a full paragraph to discuss the Curtis-Smith pieces recorded by the Merling Trio. He finds each piece compelling and describes the compilation as "a fine, well-performed and well-recorded program."

- B56. Holland, Bernard. "A Teacher Shows Herself to Be a Thoughtful Student, Too." *New York Times*, September 20, 2000.

Holland speaks highly of pianist Lori Sims' solo recital, which took place in Alice Tully Hall in New York City on September 16, 2000. Among Sims' selections was seven of Curtis-Smith's *Twelve Etudes*, which Holland finds "interesting pieces." He compares Curtis-Smith to Chopin and Debussy, but less diatonically motivated.

- B57. Holmes, Ann. "'Christopher' opera captures both sides of historic story." *Houston Chronicle*, December 8, 1992.

Holmes focuses on Da Camera's performance of *Christopher the Christ-Bearer* in Houston on December 5, 1992, in spite of the variety of other composers represented on the first half of the program. Holmes describes the staging, musical characteristics, and textual interest of the piece, as well as briefly (and positively) assessing the performance itself.

- B58. Hudson, Jeff. "Great American Symphony is a GAS!" *Watsonville Register-Pajaronian*, August 18, 1984.

Hudson applies words like precocious, fun, and witty to *GAS!* in its performance at the Cabrillo Music Festival on August 17, 1984. He briefly describes each of the four movements, in the end making the assessment that the humor, though occasionally overwrought, was skillfully handled both by Curtis-Smith's arrangement and the

orchestra. He also mentions Curtis-Smith's unexpected attendance at the concert.

B59. Hunt, Don. "Composer has international reputation." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, 26 April 1991.

In a brief article adjacent to his longer piece on Leon Fleisher, Hunt glosses through Curtis-Smith's recent compositions and takes a look at his upcoming commissions. Included are several quotes from Curtis-Smith himself, mostly pertaining to his compositional goals and his desire to move back into performance.

B60. Hunt, Don. "Format, local composer entice Fleisher to festival." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, 26 April 1991.

In the first part of this article, Hunt speaks of Leon Fleisher's admiration for the premise of the Irving S. Gilmore International Keyboard Festival- a panel of judges takes nominations and surreptitiously attends concerts to find "undiscovered talent" rather than taking hundreds of short auditions, played at the cost of the performers. Later in the article, he discusses Fleisher's work with Curtis-Smith on the *Concerto for the Left Hand and Orchestra*, commissioned by and premiered at the 1991 Gilmore Festival, and Fleisher's and Curtis-Smith's mutual regard.

B61. Johnson, Lawrence B. "Fleisher glistens in Ravel, Curtis-Smith concertos." *Detroit News*, March 18, 1994.

Pianist Leon Fleisher gave a performance of Curtis-Smith's *Concerto for Left Hand* with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra on Thursday, March 17, 1994. It was not his first performance of the piece, as he had given the premiere with the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra in 1991. Johnson felt that Fleisher's playing was excellent, and though he thought the piece was weak in the first movement, it gained momentum in the second and third.

B62. Jones, Al. "Local groups benefit from events." *Enquirer & News* [Battle Creek, MI], April 21, 1991.

The entire text of Jones's article focuses on the economic impact of the upcoming Irving S. Gilmore Keyboard Festival. Included, however, is a photo of Curtis-Smith working with pianist Leon Fleisher on Curtis-Smith's *Concerto for the Left Hand and Orchestra* [sic].

B63. Jones, Marianna. "Good Technique Noted In Smith Recital Here." *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin*, July 16, 1965.

Jones waxes eloquent for most of the article about Curtis-Smith's technical prowess in a recital given on July 15, 1965. She remarks on his improvement since he left Walla Walla to attend school, but eventually summarizes his performance as "not yet great, [but]... well on his way to mature musical artistry."

- B64. Kaczmarczyk, Jeffrey. "Cantata paints conflicting picture of Columbus." *Grand Rapids Press*, July 28, 1995.

In anticipation of the July 30, 1995 Fontana concert, Kaczmarczyk discusses Curtis-Smith's approach to composing *Gold Are My Flowers*. Comparing it to an opera without staging, Kaczmarczyk interviews Curtis-Smith to most accurately represent his goals with the piece- to represent both Columbus and the Native Americans as dynamic forces, neither heroic nor truly villainous.

- B65. Kaczmarczyk, Jeffrey. "Curtis-Smith premiere observes Kalamazoo Symphony's 75<sup>th</sup> year." *Grand Rapids Press*, March 24, 1997.

Kaczmarczyk is overall complimentary in this review of the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra's anniversary concert in Holland, MI on March 22, 1997. Though his phrasing is often somewhat backhanded, he describes the concert and the piece in positive terms. His only perceived fault lies with the symphony's performance of the final movement of the piece.

- B66. Kaczmarczyk, Jeffrey. "Ensemble to tackle complex composition." *Grand Rapids Press*, 5 October 1995.

Though Kaczmarczyk concentrates his article around the Merling Trio and their accomplishments, they are inseparable from Curtis-Smith, as their focus around the time of writing had been on learning, performing, and recording his *Second Piano Trio*. He goes into some detail about the recent CD of Curtis-Smith works produced by Gregory K. Squires.

- B67. Kaczmarczyk, Jeffrey. "Fontana Ensemble presents a program of artistic expedition, discovery." *Grand Rapids Press*, July 31, 1995.

Kaczmarczyk's assessment of the Fontana performance of *Gold Are My Flowers* is fairly subjective based on his interpretation of Columbus's relationship with the Americas, but he makes a point of emphasizing the lack of moralizing in the music, as well as the excellence of the performers. He is ambivalent toward most aspects of the piece, both in terms of the music and of the libretto.

- B68. Kaczmarczyk, Jeffrey. "Riveting trio exudes energy and magnetism." *Grand Rapids Press*, October 14, 1995.

The Merling Trio performed Curtis-Smith's *Second Piano Trio* at a concert on October 13, 1995. Kaczmarczyk's assessment of the performance was that the Merling Trio was over-prepared, and that detracted from the spontaneity of the performance. Nevertheless, he concluded that Curtis-Smith's piece was a satisfactory "heart of the concert" after a brief description of each of the three movements.

- B69. Kavanaugh, Kathy. "He's one composer who doesn't mind a little house laughter."

*Kalamazoo Gazette*, February 7, 1982.

Kavanaugh took advantage of her proximity to Curtis-Smith to quote him at length in this article. The article anticipates the premiere performance of *Great American Symphony* by the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra on February 16, 1982. Curtis-Smith describes at length his desire to break audiences and performers alike out of the mode of very serious music appreciation- as he puts it, attending a concert should be less like attending church. Kavanaugh discusses each movement, briefly, attentively discussing the “‘crazy quilt’ of American culture” that Curtis-Smith hopes to portray.

B70. “Keeping Score: Classical enthusiasts tune in to celebrated WMU professor and composer C. Curtis-Smith.” *Western Michigan University Magazine*, Fall 2004.

This two-page spread, additionally featured on the magazine’s cover, describes in a conversational tone Curtis-Smith’s general ideologies, mostly in terms of composition but also in his approach to life. It features discussion of his professional accomplishments, his interaction with Irving S. Gilmore in regard to Curtis-Smith’s refurbished Steinway piano, and a few quotations from Curtis-Smith’s colleagues.

B71. Kerner, Leighton. Untitled article. *Village Voice*, January 31, 1979.

This two-sentence review addresses the CRI recording of Curtis-Smith’s *Unisonics* and *Music for Handbells*. Kerner finds the pieces “less ambitious structurally and texturally” than Dlugoszewski’s, but finds the successful and gives the CD an “A- excellent” grade.

B72. Kimball, Robert. “Professors at the piano” in the *New York Post*. October 14, 1987.

Kimball briefly mentions Curtis-Smith’s participation in the Town Hall concert on October 12, 1987. Curtis-Smith and violinist Renata Knific delivered the world premiere *Fantasy Pieces* at the concert, joining compositions by William Bolcom and William Albright.

B73. Kline, Steve. “Weirich’s adventurous direction charms music festival audiences.” *Citizen* [Auburn, NY], September 12, 1991.

The music director, Robert Weirich, arranged the 1991 Skaneateles Festival to include an offer of residency to four composers, one of whom was Curtis-Smith. Though Curtis-Smith had pieces on several of the concerts, Kline discusses only *Fantasy Pieces* in his article, describing the piece as “unsettling” and the audience reception as “respectfully skeptical.”

B74. Knuth, Dean. “Lorimer performs new work by Curtis-Smith.” *Kalamazoo Gazette*, October 23, 1982.

Guitarist Michael Lorimer performed Curtis-Smith’s *Great American Guitar Solo* at Western Michigan University’s Dalton Recital Hall on October 22, 1982, to Knuth’s

acclaim. Both the piece itself and the performer's interpretation were considered more than satisfactory. Knuth mentions that *GAGS* is Curtis-Smith's first attempt at writing for solo guitar, but that his effort was "surprisingly adept" for someone whose "bias as a pianist is fairly evident."

- B75. Koenig, Arthur. "Curtis Smith Virtuosity Formidable." *The Forum of Fargo-Moorhead*, November 8, 1967.

Koenig recounts a recital that Curtis-Smith gave at Northern State University during his time on the faculty there. In addition to listing the pieces by other composers that Curtis-Smith played, Koenig spends time discussing *Trajectories I*, Curtis-Smith's own composition. Though he seems uncertain about the "type" of music, he rates *Trajectories I* above the Webern piece Curtis-Smith performed.

- B76. Liberty, John. "The man behind the festival." *Kalamazoo Gazette* (extra): April 13, 2008. [http://blog.mlive.com/kalamazoo\\_gazette\\_extra/2008/04/the\\_man\\_behind\\_the\\_festival.html](http://blog.mlive.com/kalamazoo_gazette_extra/2008/04/the_man_behind_the_festival.html) (accessed 2/23/19).

Liberty recounts the locally-famous story of Curtis-Smith's piano. The composer had been given \$10,000 for the purchase of the instrument by local music supporter Irving S. Gilmore in 1980; Liberty reviewed the story in light of the Irving S. Gilmore International Keyboard Festival. At the time of publication, Curtis-Smith still owned the piano.

- B77. Luke, Peter and Katherine Doud. "GENEROSITY: Ways he cared show up in the ways late Irving Gilmore shared." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, January 1986.

The majority of this article focuses on the various ways Irving S. Gilmore's generosity benefitted the community of Kalamazoo during the course of Gilmore's lifetime and beyond. The article specifically discusses the 1895 Steinway piano owned by Curtis-Smith, which Gilmore helped Curtis-Smith to purchase in 1980 to replace Curtis-Smith's personal upright piano. Though Curtis-Smith was seeking a low-interest loan, Gilmore made him a gift of the additional \$10,000 necessary to purchase the strikingly lovely refurbished instrument.

- B78. Mah, Linda S. "WMU composer and pianist C. Curtis-Smith, 72, had a long affiliation with Gilmore Festival" on *MLive*. October 14, 2014. [https://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2014/10/kalamazoo\\_composer\\_and\\_pianist.html](https://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2014/10/kalamazoo_composer_and_pianist.html) accessed 2/23/19 at 11:24 a.m.

This obituary article, published a few days after Curtis-Smith's death, provides a brief summary of Curtis-Smith's career accomplishments. Much of the article focuses on interviews with those who knew Curtis-Smith personally or had worked with him. Mah briefly touches on Curtis-Smith's recent pieces, awards, and of course, the development of bowed piano.

B79. Malitz, Nancy. "DSO's timid tribute features local works." *Detroit News*, June 1, 1987.

Malitz mentions Curtis-Smith only to lament that the Detroit Symphony Orchestra concert did *not* feature his music.

B80. Malitz, Nancy. "Keynote concerto for left-handed pianist kicks off festival." *Detroit News*, April 25, 1991.

Malitz briefly describes the Irving S. Gilmore International Keyboard Festival before introducing pianist Leon Fleisher. Toward the beginning of the article, Curtis-Smith's name is mentioned in conjunction with Fleisher's upcoming performance of *Concerto for (the) Left Hand and Orchestra*, commissioned from Curtis-Smith for premiere performance as part of the Festival. The rest of the article is spent on a biographical sketch of Fleisher.

B81. Malitz, Nancy. "Pianist shows 'offbeat' can be beautiful." *Detroit News*, May 4, 1991.

At the end of this brief article, after spending the majority of the article on 1991 Irving S. Gilmore International Keyboard Festival winner David Owen Norris, Malitz mentions the premiere of Curtis-Smith's *Concerto for the Left Hand and Orchestra* by Leon Fleisher. She describes the transition that Curtis-Smith's work was making at the time- away from Americanisms and quotations and, in this case, toward simpler and more evocative timbral colors.

B82. McGinn, Larry. "Audience Loves Curtis-Smith Work." *Post-Standard*, August 17, 1991.

McGinn resentfully reports that in spite of his own personal dislike of the piece, the audience at the August 16 performance absolutely adored Curtis-Smith's performance of *Fantasy Pieces* with Renata Knific. The performance was given as part of the Skaneateles Festival, along with several other chamber pieces.

B83. McGinn, Larry. "'Sweetgrass' Makes For Sour Listening." *Post-Standard*, August 16, 1991.

As the name of the article implies, McGinn was less than impressed by the August 15, 1991 performance of the *Sweetgrass Trio* as part of the Skaneateles Festival. He found Curtis-Smith's verbal introduction of the piece witty and charming, but felt that the piece was neither.

B84. Morrison, Chris. "On The Record: Classical." *Reno Evening Gazette*, December 23, 1979.

This article is a review of Composers Recorded, Inc. Record SD 409, entitled *Chihara & Curtis-Smith*. Curtis-Smith's piece *Masquerades* was performed by William Albright on organ. Morrison doesn't have much to say about Curtis-Smith, other than making an observation of his eclecticism, but does compliment all the performers on the recording.

- B85. Mott, Michael. "Orchestra opens on modern note" in the *Wilmington Star News*, October 12, 1988.

This article discusses a Wilmington Symphony Orchestra concert on Tuesday, October 11, 1988 at Kenan Auditorium, a concert which included Curtis-Smith's *Songs and Cantillations* of 1983. The article describes some of the background of the piece, including its treatment of Jewish ceremonial and cultural music, and names many of the key performers in the piece.

- B86. "News from Editions Salabert." December 23, 1975.

The annual "Prix Francis Salabert" was given in 1975 to composer Frank W. Becker, but Curtis-Smith, as a runner-up, received "1<sup>st</sup> Honorable Mention" for *Belle du Jour*.

- B87. "News in Brief: WMU Prof Wins Award." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, October 5, 1993.

This tiny article announces Curtis-Smith's fifteenth win of the ASCAP award and provides a small amount of biographical information for context.

- B88. Oestreich, James R. "Classical Music in Review." *New York Times*, November 23, 1992.

Oestreich spares two sentences to mention Curtis-Smith's *Fantasy Pieces*, performed on Sergiu Luca's November 16, 1992 violin concert.

- B89. Oestreich, James R. "Talking a Walk (Sort Of) On New Music's Wild Side." *New York Times*, March 17, 1997.

Ensemble 21 presented, among other pieces, Curtis-Smith's *Unisonics* on a concert of new music taking place on Tuesday, March 11, 1997 at Merkin Concert Hall in New York. Oestreich felt that *Unisonics* was the only piece that lived up to the danger implied by the concert's title: "Sex, Violence and Conspiracy: The Dangerous Side of New Music."

- B90. Olegar, Charles. "Merling Trio is superb ensemble, plays with extraordinary precision." *Grand Rapids Press*, October 30, 1993.

Olegar reviews the Merling Trio concert taking place on 29 October 1993 at Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids, MI. He has critiques of the players, more for differences in playing temperament than any technical issues, but speaks of the *Second Piano Trio* in unreservedly positive terms.

- B91. Page, Tim. "Four Pieces Make Filling Experience." *Newsday*, May 2, 1995.

Leon Fleisher took Curtis-Smith's *Concerto for Left Hand* to Carnegie Hall with the American Composers Orchestra on April 30, 1995, and though Page delighted in his

performance, he found Curtis-Smith's piece misleading. Though he described all of his reactions to the piece in unequivocally positive terms, he speculates that it was actually not as good a piece as it struck him, and that perhaps his positive reaction was simply due to Fleisher's excellence.

- B92. Parker, Rosemary. "19-night party salutes employee accomplishments." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, May 15, 1986.

To celebrate their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, The Upjohn Co. threw 19 galas on 19 consecutive evenings, ensuring that every one of their employees would be included. The Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra performed each evening, and their program included Curtis-Smith's *Celebration*.

- B93. Pinney, Gregory. "Music at Town Hall." *Student Newspaper of the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York*, October 1987.

Pinney describes Curtis-Smith's *Fantasy Pieces* as the highlight of the October 12 Town Hall concert, about which he wrote overall favorably. He found *Fantasy Pieces* most compelling among the works of Curtis-Smith, William Bolcom, and William Albright.

- B94. Pixley, Zaide. "Fontana succeeds with pieces old, brand new, even forgotten." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, August 14, 1989.

Pixley's article describes the premiere of Curtis-Smith's chamber piece *Shimmer of Evil*, a setting of a cycle of poems by Theodore Roethke for vocalist and string quartet plus double bass, clarinet, French horn, and piano. She stresses the emotional effectiveness of the piece and suggests that it deserves repeated hearings, despite her lukewarm reception of the vocalist.

- B95. Pullen, Doug. "Winston's pretty music is not as good in concert." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, 1986.

Pullen's review of a solo piano recital given by George Winston mentions Curtis-Smith only in passing- Winston "spoke highly" of Curtis-Smith during an anecdote delivered between pieces.

- B96. Pollack, Howard. "New Arts gives 'Trio' loving care." *Times-Union*, Rochester, NY, February 21, 1983.

An attendee at the world premiere of *Trio* on February 20, 1983, Pollack expresses his appreciation for a modern composer's willingness to take on a genre with such a stately history as the piano trio. His assessment of the piece itself is, however, that the humorous aspect of the pastiche tended to edge into the unrefined.

- B97. Reilly, Jim. "Skaneateles fest lightens musical mood." *Syracuse Herald-Journal*, August 15, 1991.



Reilly goes into some detail about Curtis-Smith's compositions to be featured on three sequential concerts as part of the Skaneateles festival in 1991- *Sweetgrass*, *Fantasy Pieces*, and *Music for Handbells* on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday respectively. Of note is his observation that none of the musicians playing handbells on *Music for Handbells* had ever played handbells before.

- B98. Reilly, Jim. "Skaneateles Fest tunes in to composers." *Syracuse Herald-Journal*, August 8, 1991.

Reilly goes into some depth about the planning and facilitation of the Skaneateles Festival, eventually touching on Curtis-Smith's professional relationship with Robert Weirich, the festival's organizer. Weirich briefly describes his perception of Curtis-Smith's music, as well as the upcoming performances of his pieces during the festival.

- B99. Rockwell, John. "Concert: New Arts Trio at Alice Tully Hall." *New York Times*, March 23, 1983.

Rockwell's assessment of the concert on March 21, 1983, which included Curtis-Smith's *Trio*, was overall positive, particularly where *Trio* was concerned. He quotes Curtis-Smith's words on the inclusion of various vernacular styles into the piece, which Rockwell felt he did successfully. Rockwell also compares Curtis-Smith's effect to that of Ives.

- B100. Rockwell, John. "Piano: Four Runners-Up." *New York Times*, March 6, 1980.

Rockwell's review covers the four runners-up in the 1978 Kennedy Center Rockefeller Foundation International Competition for Excellence in the Performance of American Music, all of whom performed at Alice Tully Hall in New York on March 3, 1980. One of the pianists, Robert Weirich, performed Curtis-Smith's *Rhapsodies*, which Rockwell found interesting, but overly coloristic.

- B101. Rockwell, John. "The Rich Diversity of New American Music." *New York Times*, April 27, 1980.

Rockwell's assessment of CRI SD 409, the recording of William Albright's performance of *Masquerades*, is somewhat less than warm- he finds it adequate, as it "does muster up a few striking new effects on the organ," but unindividual.

- B102. Rothstein, Edward. "Music: Works by Carter and Barber." *New York Times*, November 7, 1983.

The concert reviewed here, taking place on November 6, 1983 in Avery Fisher Hall, was a performance by the American Composers Orchestra of pieces by Elliot Carter, Curtis-Smith, and Samuel Barber. Rothstein's assessment of *Great American Symphony* is not flattering- he found the work pompous and the ideology of the piece, a hodgepodge

representation of America, tiresome and ill-realized.

- B103. Ruhlman, Lori Bergstrom. "Skaneateles secret." *Democrat and Chronicle/Times-Union*, Rochester, NY, August 8, 1991.

Most of Ruhlman's article addresses the general trajectory of the Skaneateles Festival, taking place for its 12<sup>th</sup> year in August 1991. For the inception of the "The Year of the Composer" program, a new addition to the Festival, Curtis-Smith was one of four composers asked to attend and explain his pieces at the relevant concerts. Curtis-Smith's pieces were performed on August 15 (*Sweetgrass Trio*) and August 17 (*Music for Handbells*).

- B104. Saelzler, Elizabeth. "ASCAP awards two published professors." *Western Herald*, September 3, 1992.

Saelzler commemorates Curtis-Smith's twelfth receipt of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers Award for 1992-1993 with this short write-up. The award is given to an individual with a high level of performance activity and based on their previous and current compositional activity. Saelzler briefly summarizes Curtis-Smith's career accomplishments before moving on to talk about the other award recipient, Alfred Balkin.

- B105. Salisbury, Wilma. "Merling casts spell with Curtis-Smith." *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, November 5, 1995.

The Merling Trio released a record of Curtis-Smith's compositions in 1994, which Salisbury reviews to the credit of both the ensemble and Curtis-Smith. The composer himself is featured as a performer on the album, joining violinist Renata Knific on *Fantasy Pieces*. This article also announces the trio's upcoming performance of Curtis-Smith's work on the November 12, 1995 concert in Cleveland.

- B106. Salisbury, Wilma. "Organ stars in newest compositions to honor art museum." *Plain Dealer*, 2 November 1992.

The Cleveland Museum of Art commissioned no less than 10 pieces for their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and Curtis-Smith's *The Mystic Trumpeter* was premiered at their concert on November 1, 1992. Salisbury was less than impressed with *Trumpeter*- though she acknowledged the drama and ambition of the piece, she found it predictable and "rather naive."

- B107. Salzman, Eric. "New Sounds from the Avant Garde." *Stereo Review*, June 1979.

Salzman doesn't mince words in this review of contemporary recordings. The CRI recording of Curtis-Smith's *Unisonics* and *Music for Handbells* is one of the few that meets with his approval, albeit tentatively, but he implies that *Music for Handbells* is too long.

- B108. Sanford, James. "Composers combine talents on 'Collusions.'" *Kalamazoo Gazette*, November 1, 1998.

Curtis-Smith and William Bolcom, longtime friends, shared an office at the University of Michigan while Curtis-Smith was a visiting professor there. During that time, they collaborated on solo piano piece *Collusions*, each writing a handful of measures at a time before passing the manuscript to the other. The piece was premiered by James Giles on November 3 at Western Michigan University.

- B109. Schwartz, Jerry. "Music: Classical." *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, January 19, 1980.

Schwartz spends a significant portion of this article, a review of William Albright's performance of *Masquerades* on CRI 409, discussing the piece's score. He seems delighted by Curtis-Smith's "unprecedented but most welcome step" in providing him a copy of the score, and in turn describes some of the composer's more charming notes and illustrations directed to the performer. In the end, he assesses the piece as "interesting and fun to hear."

- B110. Shere, Charles. "...mars a fine Cabrillo music fest." *Oakland Tribune*, August 20, 1984.

Dennis Russell Davies programmed and conducted Curtis-Smith's *The Great American Symphony* on Friday, August 17, 1984. Shere found the piece objectively interesting, but faulted Davies in programming it, on the grounds that it was too large a piece for the context of the concert.

- B111. Smyntek, John, ed. "Briefly." *Detroit Free Press*, May 9, 1990.

Smyntek mentions in a very brief bullet-point Curtis-Smith's recent honor in the Michigan Arts Awards.

- B112. Spykerman, John. "Music professor receives grant for composition." *Western Herald*, October 24, 1994.

Spykerman's article was prompted by Curtis-Smith's recent \$7,000 grant, awarded by the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers. He focuses mostly on *African Laughter*, the composition of which was funded by the grant, but also delves briefly into Curtis-Smith's other new projects- Leon Fleisher's recent performance of *Concerto for Left Hand and Orchestra* and two newly released CD recordings.

- B113. Stabler, David. "Mixture of music makes marvelous program at Cascade Head." *Oregonian*, June 20, 1991.

Curtis-Smith's *Sweet Grass Trio* [sic] was played at the Cascade Head Music Festival in 1991. Stabler discusses several of the composers represented at the festival, but spends a paragraph on *Sweetgrass*, expressing appreciation for the piece itself and the

performance.

- B114. Steel, Matthew. "Fontana concert was amazing." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, August 20, 2007.

Steel speaks as a colleague of Curtis-Smith's at Western Michigan University when he comments on how much he enjoyed the recent performance of Curtis-Smith's *Quintet* at the Fontana Festival. Steel compliments both the composition itself and the student and faculty performers involved with the event.

- B115. Stiller, Andrew. "Records: Classical." *Buffalo Evening News*, February 8, 1980.

Stiller's resoundingly negative assessment of CRI SDs 412, 416, and 409 is tempered by his effusive and unexpected praise of Curtis-Smith's *Masquerades*, found on CRI SD 409 as performed by William Albright. He compares the humor found in *Masquerades* to that found in the works of Haydn and Stravinsky and compliments the work's depth and personality.

- B116. Stycos, Roland. "Symphony's anniversary a time to share." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, January 27, 1992.

Stycos reports on the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary concert, taking place on Saturday, January 25, 1992. The KSO played Curtis-Smith's *Celebration*, composed and premiered in 1985 for the Upjohn centennial. Stycos comments on how the fanfare uses other instruments to mimic trumpets as often as he uses actual trumpets. The article includes two photos of the symphony.

- B117. Surkamp, David. "Guitarist Spellbinds Audience." *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 20.

Guitarist David Tanenbaum performed Curtis-Smith's *Great American Guitar Solo* in what Surkamp considered to be the "standout performance of the evening." The rest of the article focused on Tanenbaum's considerable ability as a performer.

- B118. Talbert, Bob. "The Menu: Music, dancing, tattoos, poetry." *Detroit Free Press*, February 8, 1995.

In his discussion of upcoming events, Talbert mentions Curtis-Smith's *African Laughing* [sic], which would be performed at the Cranbrook Kingswood Auditorium on Sunday, February 12.

- B118.5 Terry, Kenneth. Untitled article. *Down Beat*, March 22, 1979.

Terry looks at recordings of both *Unisonics* and *Music for Handbells* in this review, with vastly different opinions of the two. He characterizes *Music for Handbells* as a "masterpiece," but finds *Unisonics* unsatisfying and unpolished. Overall, he finds the album (which also contains Lucia Dlugoszewski's *Tender Theatre Flight Nageire*) excellent.

- B119. Thompson, Tracy. "WMU prof receives same award 18 times." *Western Herald*, November 15, 1995.

As the title implies, this article was written upon Curtis-Smith's 18<sup>th</sup> consecutive receipt of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers Award for the 18<sup>th</sup> consecutive time. The rather numerical write-up cites his awards at 75 and compositions over 100, and makes mention of the Merling Trio recording of his works as well as several noteworthy performances of his pieces.

- B120. Thornton, H. Frank. Unnamed article. *The New Records*, March 1980.

Briefly, Thornton mentions Curtis-Smith's "fine academic background and glowing list of awards" and describes *Masquerades* as performed by William Albright on CRI SD 409 as "more astringent but wryly humorous."

- B121. Tommasini, Anthony. "Pianist as Polymath (Pollyanna?)." *New York Times*, April 23, 1995.

This comprehensive article centers around pianist Leon Fleisher's career in performance and administration, but is predicated on Fleisher's upcoming 30 April 1995 performance of Curtis-Smith's *Concerto for Left Hand and Orchestra*. Mention of Curtis-Smith himself is minimal, other than affirmation that Fleisher enjoys and appreciates the *Concerto* and intends to continue performing it.

- B122. "Two faculty, two students to be honored by MAGB." *Western News*.

The Michigan Association of Governing Boards of State Universities awarded honors to two faculty members (Curtis-Smith and Ruth Beall Heinig) and two students at Western Michigan University. Curtis-Smith's achievements are outlined, as are those of the other award recipients, in describing how each recipient meets the award criteria.

- B123. Ward, Charles. "Two ways of 'Regarding Columbus': 'Christ-Bearer' lets views collide in music and text." *Houston Chronicle*, November 29, 1992.

Rather than detailing Curtis-Smith's musical contribution, this article focuses extensively on Native American librettist and collaborator Linda Hogan and her contribution to the "cantata/melodrama." Her influence helped Curtis-Smith to narrow his resources and most effectively communicate Columbus's religious fervor and greed, as well as elucidating the perspective of the Native Americans he exploited.

- B124. Ward, Charles. "Composer takes a bow." *Houston Chronicle*, April 17, 1989.

This article is an in-depth advertisement for an upcoming concert featuring Curtis-Smith's music, scheduled to take place on Tuesday, April 8 at the Menil Collection, 1515

Sul Ross, for the Da Camera society. The program included, among other selections, Brian Connelly (piano) and Sergiu Luca (violin) performing *Fantasy Pieces*. Ward goes into some detail about bowed piano, including Curtis-Smith's development of the technique as well as his attitude toward composition.

- B125. Ward, Charles. "Da Camera series ends with flourish." *Houston Chronicle*, April 20, 1989.

The concert that took place on Tuesday, April 18 was the last in a series known as *After 1910*, four concerts featuring two decades of composition each. One of the pieces on this program was Curtis-Smith's *Fantasy Pieces* for violin and piano, as performed by the composer and Da Camera music artistic director Sergiu Luca.

- B126. Wedel, Mark. "Bankrupt orchestra cancels Gilmore shows." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, March 17, 2006.

Wedel announces that the Northwest Chamber Orchestra went bankrupt and would not be making their scheduled appearances at the Gilmore International Keyboard Festival on May 1 and 5, 2006. Though they were intended to premiere Curtis-Smith's double concerto on May 1, the piece would instead be performed by a chamber ensemble drawn from within the Kalamazoo Symphony. Soloists Elina Vähälä and Ralf Góthoni would remain unchanged.

- B127. Wedel, Mark. "Never Before Heard: Commissioned works bring sparkle to Gilmore Festival." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, ca. March 2006.

Wedel's lengthy article in the *Kalamazoo Gazette* anticipates the upcoming Gilmore Festival concert featuring a new composition by Curtis-Smith: the *Double Concerto for Violin, Piano, and Strings*. He discusses the commission of the piece, the featured soloists, and the replacement of the Northwest Chamber Orchestra with members of the Kalamazoo Symphony. The end of the article addresses in more detail several of the soloists on this piece and others as well as a few other details about Curtis-Smith's compositional approach.

- B128. Wedel, Mark. "Taylor, quartet replace orchestra in Gilmore lineup." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, March 25, 2006.

Wedel focuses on the reorganization of performers in this short article in the *Kalamazoo Gazette*. Two concerts at the 2006 Gilmore International Keyboard Festival, scheduled for May 1 and 5, would be trading out performers due to the bankruptcy and subsequent cancellation of the Northwest Chamber Orchestra. The debut of Curtis-Smith's *Double Concerto for Violin, Piano and Chamber Orchestra* would take place on the May 1 concert, performed by members of the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra. The May 5 concert was re-programmed and new participants were added.

- B129. West, Kevin (ed.). "40 Years & Glowing." *Perfect Pitch: School of Music*, 2008.

Three staff members celebrated their 40<sup>th</sup> year of involvement at Western Michigan University in 2008- Robert Ricci, Carl Doubleday, and Curtis Curtis-Smith. As Curtis-Smith is discussed elsewhere in the publication, his mention in this article is mostly confined to a (flattering) quote from a New York Times reviewer.

- B130. West, Kevin (ed.). "Curtis Curtis-Smith- 40 Years." *Perfect Pitch: School of Music*, 2008.

This short article announces the upcoming concert in honor of Curtis-Smith's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of teaching at Western Michigan University. It briefly outlines Curtis-Smith's accomplishments, then lists the performers featured on the concert, as well as the concert date, time, and cost.

- B131. West, William D. "A Magic Night at Skaneateles Fest."

West reviews the Skaneateles Festival concert taking place on Saturday, August 17, which included *Music for Handbells*. Though only a paragraph is devoted to Curtis-Smith, West is overall complimentary about the piece and the performance, describing it as intricate but with strength.

- B132. White, Arthur T. "Melodic material based on change ringing." *The Ringing World*, June 28, 1991.

White, a mathematics professor, submitted this brief article to *The Ringing World* after attending a concert at Western Michigan University at which *Music for Handbells* was performed. He includes a section of Curtis-Smith's program notes and discusses with great interest the incorporation of change ringing into the piece.

- B133. "WMU professor's work to be played Saturday." *Enquirer & News*, Battle Creek, MI, April 21, 1991.

This brief paragraph announces the April 27, 1991 premiere concert of Curtis-Smith's *Concerto for the Left Hand and Orchestra* by pianist Leon Fleisher. It also briefly outlines Fleisher's career and Curtis-Smith's compositional accomplishments.

- B134. Wigler, Stephen. "Music Review: New Arts Trio performs solemn works with mastery." *Democrat and Chronicle*, Rochester, NY, February 21, 1983.

The New Arts Trio performed Curtis-Smith's *Trio* at a concert on February 20, 1983, to the approbation of Wigler, who felt that it attained the same standard as the R. Schumann and Tchaikovsky pieces also on the program. Wigler mentions Curtis-Smith's use of George Harrison's bassline from *While My Guitar Gently Weeps* in the last movement of the *Trio* and the fact that Curtis-Smith was in attendance at the performance.

- B135. Woodruff, David. "Upjohn Co. throwing the birthday bash of the century." *Kalamazoo Gazette*, May 2, 1986.

This more detailed article outlines the upcoming celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Upjohn Co., including the Curtis-Smith piece *Celebration* on the nightly Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra concert.

B136. “Young Pianist Wins: Music Festival Top Award Given.” *Spokane Review*, May 27, 1962.

This early article in the *Spokane Review* describes one of Curtis-Smith’s earliest awards—the first grand award at the Greater Spokane Music and Allied Arts Festival. At 20, Curtis-Smith was considered to have great promise as a performer. Along with mention of his teachers and a description of the festival, the article mentions Curtis-Smith’s accomplishments to date and his plans for the future.

B137. Zuck, Barbara. “ProMusica offers double treat with premiere of concertos.” *Columbus Dispatch*, March 8, 1999.

Zuck makes a point of mentioning the difficulty of the piece, almost before any other aspect of the work. Premiered by soloist Sergei Luca and the ProMusica Chamber Orchestra on Sunday, March 7, 1999, Zuck describes the work as challenging performers and listeners alike, but finds it “well-conceived” and compliments ProMusica for undertaking the commission and premiere.



## C: Articles in Music Journals

Found here are articles from academic journals and periodicals.

C1. Ayscue, Brian. Untitled article. *Saxophone Symposium* 4, no. 1 (Winter 1979).

Ayscue reviews the recent release of “American Contemporary: Sonorous Explorations,” a CD containing a recording of Curtis-Smith’s *Unisonics* as played by the composer with Trent Kynaston. He (Ayscue) makes a point of mentioning the technical difficulty of the piece but compliments both the performers and the composition.

C2. Burge, David. “Contemporary Piano: Curtis Curtis-Smith’s *Rhapsodies*.” *Contemporary Keyboard* 3 no. 5 (1977).

Burge’s flattering assessment of *Rhapsodies* contains a thorough exploration of the piece from a theoretical perspective and contains several examples from the score. He discusses each of the three movements and the extended techniques used in each and provides contact information for those interested in performing the piece.

C3. Cahill, Sarah. “The Inside Story.” *Piano & Keyboard*. 203 (Mar/April 2000): 32-35.

Cahill concerns herself with piano extended techniques that use the interior of the piano. She covers a range of techniques, performers, and composers, addressing toward the end Stephen Scott, Curtis-Smith, and their development of bowed piano.

C6. Tosone, Jim. “The Guitar on Disc.” *Guitar Review*. (Fall 1994/ Winter 1995).

Guitarist David Tanenbaum recorded and released an album of contemporary guitar solos, including and named after Curtis-Smith’s *Great American Guitar Solo*. Here, Tosone describes it briefly, affirming Tanenbaum’s adeptness at contemporary American music.

C7. Weirich, Robert. “Artistic Absolutes and the Girl from Kalamazoo.” *Clavier*. (September 1991).

Weirich reports on the first iteration of the Irving S. Gilmore International Keyboard Festival, taking place in Kalamazoo, MI in 1991. The opening night performance featured Leon Fleisher after intermission with the world premiere of Curtis-Smith’s *Concerto for the Left Hand and Orchestra*, a piece commissioned by the Festival. Weirich, though expressing some doubts about the winner of the competition portion of the festival, is warm in his commendation of the piece and in particular of Fleisher’s playing. The article includes a photo of Fleisher working on the *Concerto*.

## D: Correspondence and Unpublished Materials

The unpublished materials found in this section take a variety of forms. Some are interviews, recorded or published informally. Others are correspondences, sometimes on paper and sometimes via email, that illustrate Curtis-Smith's attitude toward life events or compositions, and the reactions of those to whom he wrote. Still others are "official" documents, like resumes, curricula vitae, and applications for sabbaticals or grants, that detail chronology and purpose.

Note: groups of bi-directional correspondence that include Curtis-Smith and another individual are listed under the name of the other person. C. Curtis-Smith is listed as such, regardless if other names are used. Curtis-Smith's mother is variously known as Mary Smith, Mary F. Smith, and Mary Feigner; in this bibliography she is referenced as Mary F. Smith. Items are listed in alphabetical order according to the first listed author.

- D1. Adams, Kimberly to C. Curtis-Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: 14 September 1994.

The Board of Trustees of the Arts Foundation of Michigan awarded Curtis-Smith a grant for the full amount he asked for in his application, though several months after his initial application. The letter, after the requisite congratulations, details the specific action steps necessary for Curtis-Smith to receive the funding.

- D2. Bergquist, Peter to C. Curtis-Smith and vice versa. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: 3 April 1978, 28 February 1978, 30 January 1978, 24 January 1978.

Curtis-Smith applied for a position teaching composition at University of Oregon. Bergquist wrote back to tell Curtis-Smith that the position would be a pay cut from his current job, which Curtis-Smith accepted, but by the time that communication was completed, the post had been filled.

- D3. Bolcom, William to C. Curtis-Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: 3 June 2000.

Bolcom sent this short typewritten letter to Curtis-Smith upon receiving a copy of the

score for *12 Etudes*. He considers the piece fresh and interesting, and spends the rest of the letter discussing with some disgruntlement the state of the publishing industry and the best way to disseminate *Etudes* among active musicians.

- D4. Boyd, Anne to C. Curtis-Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: 11 November 1983.

Boyd writes to Curtis-Smith upon receipt of his application for Lecturer in the Department of Music at the University of Hong Kong. In addition to her request for more materials, she clarifies some of the requirements of the position.

- D5. Crowder, Louis L. to C. Curtis-Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 20: March 18, 1966.

This brief note from Louis Crowder informs Curtis-Smith that Crowder has sent a recommendation to Illinois on Curtis-Smith's behalf, and laments a recent injury of Curtis-Smith's and the fact that Crowder's own university did not have a suitable opening.

- D6. Crumb, George to C. Curtis-Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 8, folder 20.

Curtis-Smith sent a copy of the score and a recording of *Great American Symphony* to George Crumb during Crumb's tenure at the University of Pennsylvania. In this handwritten response, Crumb is warmly complimentary toward the piece, describing it as "more fun than a barrel of monkeys!" He asks to keep the score and cassette, a request that Curtis-Smith almost certainly acceded to.

- D7. Curtis-Smith, C. Application for Arts Foundation of Michigan Creative Artists Grant. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: May 1994.

This application packet requests a \$7,000 grant from the Arts Foundation of Michigan as part of their Creative Artists Grant program. In addition to the more detail oriented business documents detailing costs and fees, Curtis-Smith includes a relatively extensive description of the piece he intends to compose- later called *African Laughter*. He also includes a very much abbreviated copy of his resume.

- D8. Curtis-Smith, C. Application for Employment. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: November 29, 1977.

This application for employment form contains details of Curtis-Smith's professional history and education.

- D9. Curtis-Smith, C. Application for Sabbatical Leave, fragment. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15.

Though this piece of a sabbatical application begins on page 4, it contains several pages of material about Curtis-Smith's intentions for his time away from campus. It also contains several paragraphs dedicated to his compositional development and teaching and performing strategies. This is speculated to be part of the same document as the 5 October 1974 letter to Dr. Robert Fink requesting sabbatical leave.

- D10. Curtis-Smith, C. Application for Sabbatical Leave. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: September 12, 1990.

This application for sabbatical leave was submitted in 1990, for Curtis-Smith's sabbatical of 1991-1992. The report includes his proposals for the pieces he intended to work on (*Gold Are My Flowers*, at this point still untitled, and *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*), his recent academic activity, and the customary accounting of his publications, performances, and awards.

- D11. Curtis-Smith, C. Professional resume pamphlet. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: ca. 1981.

This attractive brochure features a photo of Curtis-Smith surrounded by notation for one of his compositions on the cover. The interior contains sections detailing press comments, awards, commissions, recordings, publishers, compositions (including instrumentation and length), and a brief biographical sketch. The latest listed composition was dated 1980-81, implying that the brochure was printed around that time.

- D12. Curtis-Smith, C. Sabbatical Leave Report. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 8, folder 22: April 21, 1993.

Curtis-Smith's report details the results of his sabbatical leave, which took place from the beginning of the fall term in 1991 to the end of the summer term in 1992. He proposed to work on two projects: his cantata *Christopher the Christ-Bearer* [later re-titled *Gold Are My Flowers*]; and his *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*. His write-up outlines the compositional process for each piece and the premiere of *Christopher the Christ-Bearer*. He also discusses his work on his *Second Piano Trio*, which was not part of his proposal but a "significant portion" of which was composed during this time.

- D13. Curtis-Smith, C. Sabbatical Report. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: December 31, 1977.

In this report, Curtis-Smith describes the results of his sabbatical leave taking place from September 1975 to August 1976. He proposed five pieces, and he wrote five pieces, though the categories did not align as expected. Brief descriptions of the five compositions are included, as well as the details of their premiere performances.

- D14. Curtis-Smith, C. Sabbatical Report. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: December 21, 1986.

The sabbatical leave Curtis-Smith reports on took place from fall semester in 1984 to summer 1985. He reiterates the projects he proposed, a chamber, an orchestral, and a choral piece, then describes the results of his efforts in each case. He also mentions the opportunities he had for further ethnomusicological study during this time, which he felt benefitted both his composition and his teaching.

- D15. Curtis-Smith, C. to Irving Gilmore. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: September 16, 1980.

Irving Gilmore provided Curtis-Smith with substantial funding toward the purchase of his piano, and Curtis-Smith expresses his gratitude in this short letter. He mentions his excitement to practice and perform on the instrument and invites Gilmore to come hear it or play it himself.

- D16. Curtis-Smith, C. to James M. Reeder. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: November 26, 1980.

Curtis-Smith writes this letter to apologize for the lateness of payment on the balance for his new piano, purchased earlier that year. At this point, he was still waiting on grant funding to come in. He also takes the opportunity to express his enthusiasm about and admiration for the new instrument.

- D17. Curtis-Smith, C. to Henry A. Upper. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: February 16, 1987, February 27, 1987.

Curtis-Smith's two letters here are an application for employment at Indiana University, a senior-level position in composition. The letter of February 16 was a standard cover letter; that of February 27 was a request to use an older letter from Herbert Butler (from 1983; according to Curtis-Smith, still in IU's possession) as one of his recommendations, as Butler had passed away in 1983 but Curtis-Smith still wished to use his recommendation.

- D18. Curtis-Smith, C. to Leonard Bernstein. Western Michigan University Archive, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: September 9, 1972.

Curtis-Smith's typewritten letter shows extensive corrections to be made in the next draft. The body of the text, however, appears intended to remain unchanged. Curtis-Smith thanks Bernstein for underwriting the Tanglewood Institute, compliments his work with the orchestra during the summer session that Bernstein and Curtis-Smith both attended, and informs Bernstein of his win of the Koussevitsky Prize for *Comedie*, written during the same session at Tanglewood.

- D19. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: February 1, 1967.

This short letter from Curtis-Smith to his mother informs her that he taught fewer piano

students than the previous semester, would be teaching a composition class that semester, and that he would be giving a recital on February 13 in spite of a physical issue in one of his fingers.

- D20. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: April 2, 1967.

Curtis-Smith discusses his dissatisfaction with his current position at the school and his numerous recitals, both past and upcoming.

- D21. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: October 8, 1968.

Penned on Western Michigan University stationary, this letter from Curtis-Smith to his mother informs her that he had been offered a permanent position at the university only the week before. He goes on to discuss practical matters, including his own health and that of his mother.

- D22. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: February 16, 1969.

Early in February (or perhaps in January), Curtis-Smith traveled to New York City to perform a piano recital. This letter to his mother recounts the details of his trip, which included time in Hartford, CT before the concert and Washington D.C. after. He also mentions that he is playing the “last recital for this year— the fifteenth thus far this year” at Eastern Michigan University the next day.

- D23. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: March 8, 1969.

Over a third of this letter addresses Curtis-Smith’s dissatisfaction with his hometown newspaper’s write-up of his recent concert in New York City. The rest of the letter recounts practical matters and encourages his mother to ride her bicycle.

- D24. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: April 8, 1969.

In this letter to his mother in 1969, Curtis-Smith describes (rather vaguely) his involvement in the “3 Days of Contemporary Music” event at Western Michigan University as well as an offer to teach at Andrews University during the coming summer, which he had to refuse due to his obligations at WMU. The letter mentions an included poster for the Contemporary Music event, which is no longer present. The remainder of the letter focuses on personal matters.

- D25. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: May 5, 1969.

Of note in this letter from Curtis-Smith to his mother is his mention of teaching summer terms at WMU as well as the High School Music Workshop Piano Seminar. He mentions plans to visit Washington later in the summer. The remainder of the letter discusses his living arrangements and his responsibility to hire a Graduate Assistant for piano for the coming year.

- D26. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: April 11, 1970.

In this letter from Curtis-Smith to his mother is his description of his musical activities—primarily, his involvement with the Three Days of Contemporary Music. Of note is the fact that he conducted as well as performed, unusual but not unheard of for him. The rest of the letter addresses his living situation and his mother's.

- D27. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: July 21, 1970.

Curtis-Smith focuses primarily on two topics in this letter to his mother: his participation in a summer high school music camp at Western, and a job offer he received from Carnegie-Mellon University. He also mentions WMU's intention to create an electronic music studio, and his travel plans for the rest of the summer.

- D28. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: January 19, 1971.

This letter from Curtis-Smith to his mother addresses some of his travel plans, several upcoming piano performances, and some academic considerations. A graduate student hired to teach classes was giving the university trouble, and there were budget cuts as well.

- D29. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: March 2, 1971.

This short letter mentions, among more mundane things, the electronic music Curtis-Smith was working on composing during the spring of 1971.

- D30. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: January 15, 1972.

Though most of this letter addresses Curtis-Smith's recent trip to Washington to visit his sister Margaret. Toward the end of the letter, however, he describes his upcoming performances, plus the possibility of publishing some of his compositions.

- D31. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: February 13, 1975.

This chatty, upbeat letter from Curtis-Smith to his mother reports on both his professional accomplishments and his nutrition. He mentions his win of the Concorso Internazionale di Musica e Danze G. B. Viotti, a few upcoming performances of his compositions, and a re-orchestration of a piece he was working on for the Detroit Symphony. He also discusses his position at the university- his responsibilities while another faculty member was on sabbatical and his own approved sabbatical application.

- D32. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: May 8, 1975.

Curtis-Smith was finishing up the semester at WMU when he wrote this letter to his mother, and it contains several updates on his professional life. He recounts the progress on *(Bells) Belle du Jour* for the Detroit Symphony, a concert in New York that he didn't much enjoy, and David Burge's impending move to Eastman School of Music. He also describes his interest in a few specific local houses with architectural value!

- D33. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: January 7, 1976.

Still on his sabbatical leave, Curtis-Smith reports to his mother on his eating habits (good), his exercise (improving), and his musical endeavors. He is in contact with Salabert about the publication of one of his pieces (he doesn't specify which) and has communicated with them both by mail and on the phone. He also describes the new piano he received and the repairs necessary.

- D34. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: January 14, 1976.

Curtis-Smith expresses regrets about the death of a cousin of his, and discusses the breaks in his composing he's been taking to apply for grants and rehearse a piece of his (*(Bells) Belle du Jour*) on which he would be performing in an upcoming orchestra concert.

- D35. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: January 21, 1976.

Some drama involving Curtis-Smith's submission to a French publisher's competition is reviewed in this letter, and he recounts his efforts to get the master score for *(Bells) Belle du Jour* back from an acquaintance in California. He also describes an upcoming trip to Indiana to work with an orchestra there, and the break from composing necessitated by that and his upcoming performance with WMU's orchestra on *(Bells) Belle du Jour*.

- D36. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: February 16, 1976.

In what amounts to a rather irritable letter to his mother, Curtis-Smith recounts his



frustration with the Western Orchestra at WMU, with whom he played *(Bells) Belle du Jour* earlier that month, turning down a paid opportunity from the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra to do so. He also describes the issues with WMU administration and the grant writing process.

- D37. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: February 19, 1976.

The musical news in this letter is that Salabert, Curtis-Smith's publisher in France, nominated his piece *(Bells) Belle du Jour* for a Pulitzer! Curtis-Smith also mentions the repairs to his piano and spends a great deal of time talking about lentils.

- D38. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: February 29, 1976.

After a seminar Curtis-Smith delivered at the University of Michigan, William Albright commissioned Curtis-Smith to write a piece for solo organ. This letter recounts that experience, plus Curtis-Smith's frustration with the piano solo piece he was working on at the time, and an update on the publication of *(Bells) Belle du Jour* and *Five Sonorous Inventions* by Editions Salabert.

- D39. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: November 29, 1976.

During the time that this letter was written, Curtis-Smith was serving as Visiting Professor at University of Michigan and much of his letter discusses his experiences there. He was recommended for a position in the piano department, but in spite of his colleagues' desires to keep him at the university, neither piano nor composition had available positions. Curtis-Smith also discusses his friendship with William Albright and William Bolcom, and his experiences with the classes he taught.

- D40. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: April 8, 1976.

The majority of this letter recounts Curtis-Smith's upcoming Visiting Professorship at University of Michigan, fall 1976-spring 1977. Though he is unclear about how the situation came about, presumably having recounted it in another letter, he describes the details of his duties. He also mentions his plans for the upcoming summer.

- D41. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: February 10, 1977.

Curtis-Smith's letter to his mother discusses his academic course load at University of Michigan (lighter than the previous semester), performances of his pieces, his experimentation with tuning systems, and general details of life.

- D42. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: July 17, 1979.

Curtis-Smith's plans to visit his mother were upset by the fact that one of his pieces would be performed at Tanglewood in the summer of 1979. In addition to that, this letter addresses some household concerns and Curtis-Smith's work on his *Quintet*.

- D43. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: October 15, 1980.

Curtis-Smith recounts a dinner party held at the home of a friend which culminated at the Curtis-Smith residence to hear his new piano. The party included Irving S. Gilmore, noted Kalamazoo resident who generously helped Curtis-Smith with the purchase of the piano in question. Curtis-Smith also discusses their recent culinary excursions, their living situation, and the weather.

- D44. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: November 30, 1980.

Irving Gilmore's visit to the Curtis-Smith home in 1980 is recounted in this letter to Curtis-Smith's mother; Gilmore finally got to try out the piano he helped purchase. The letter also describes a few hand-me-down items from a neighbor and other day-to-day concerns.

- D45. Curtis-Smith, C. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: December 10, 1981.

During December, Curtis-Smith hosted his piano students for miniature studio recitals once per week, which he describes to his mother in this letter. He also notes a visit with William Albright, the formation of a neighborhood association, and a misadventure with their dog Duffy.

- D46. Curtis-Smith, C. to William B. Christ. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: January 23, 1983.

This letter, and the attached addendum from the next day, indicate Curtis-Smith's interest in an opening in the composition department at Indiana University.

- D47. Curtis-Smith, C. to Robert Fink. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: October 5, 1974.

In this formal business letter, Curtis-Smith requests a sabbatical leave for the academic year spanning fall 1975 to summer 1976. Made in his seventh year as a full-time faculty member at WMU, this is his first request for a sabbatical. He describes the success of some of his earlier compositions, and asks for a substantial period of time during which to devote himself to composing without the distractions of teaching and performing.

- D48. Duffie, Bruce. "Composer C. Curtis-Smith: A Conversation with Bruce Duffie."  
<http://www.bruceduffie.com/curtis-smith.html> (accessed March 5, 2019).

Duffie's interview with Curtis-Smith in December 1996, transcribed on this website, covers a wide range of topics; from Curtis-Smith's name, to compositional theory, to the upcoming premiere of one of Curtis-Smith's pieces. In addition to the factual information, Curtis-Smith illustrates several interesting opinions about music and interpretation, and the importance of allowing performers a certain amount of freedom to make decisions.

- D49. Johansen, Amy to C. Curtis-Smith and vice versa. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 40, folder 6: March 29, 2006.

In this brief email exchange, Amy Johansen, organist at Sydney University, asks Curtis-Smith if she can purchase and program two of Curtis-Smith's pieces, *Masquerades* and *Masques d'Afrique*.

- D50. Keiler, Allan to Curtis-Smith, C. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: May 9, 1983.

Keiler writes from Brandeis University to thank Curtis-Smith for his application for the opening in their composition department. Attached to the letter from Keiler is Curtis-Smith's initial cover letter and expression of interest and a copy of the position listing.

- D51. Lorimer, Michael to the Arts Foundation of Michigan. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: January 4, 1989.

In this glowing letter of recommendation, Lorimer discusses a number of Curtis-Smith's pieces and their impact on contemporary music. For two pages he is nothing but complimentary, and strongly encourages the Foundation to award Curtis-Smith the Michigan Arts Award in Music.

- D52. Lorimer, Michael to Harry A. Upper. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: February 25, 1987.

Curtis-Smith applied for a composition faculty position at Indiana University, and Lorimer wrote this letter of recommendation in response to Curtis-Smith's request. He discusses a variety of Curtis-Smith's well known pieces and assures Dr. Upper that Curtis-Smith would be an excellent teacher and addition to the IU faculty.

- D53. Lorince, Frank to C. Curtis-Smith and vice versa. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: February 18, 1987, February 9, 1978, January 31, 1978.

The three letters included in this packet request further materials from Curtis-Smith (for example, scores and recordings), and document when he obliged the requests.

- D54. Mandell, Barbara to C. Curtis-Smith and vice versa. Tanglewood. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: April 15, 1990.

Mandell wrote to Curtis-Smith to ask for his biography, photos, and anecdotes from his time at Tanglewood, for a yearbook commemorating Tanglewood's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In his reply, Curtis-Smith includes his bio as requested, a few short (and amusing) anecdotes about Bruno Madera, with whom he studied, and a request about how his name should be printed.

- D55. Mann, Robert W. to C. Curtis-Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 20: February 10, 1975.

Mann's letter congratulates Curtis-Smith on his 4<sup>th</sup> Category recognition in the VII Concorso Internazionale di Composizione della Società Italiana Musica Contemporanea. Category 4 denotes chamber works for up to 11 players, and Curtis-Smith placed with *Five Sonorous Inventions*. Enclosed is a copy of the list of awardees.

- D56. McCoy, Kathryn and C. Curtis-Smith. Diary, Beginning Jan 1, 2000. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 39: 2000.

This typed document represents the shared journal of Curtis-Smith and his wife Kathy McCoy for the year 2000. There is no more than one entry per day, not every day, and could be written by either; the author is rarely specified. They use the names Kobs (for Curtis-Smith) and Kutch (for McCoy). Entries span both professional and personal matters.

- D57. McCoy, Kathy to Mary Feigner. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: February 10, 1977.

McCoy's letter to Curtis-Smith's mother mostly focuses on household concerns and questions for Mary, but mentions Curtis-Smith's efforts to find alternate employment at another university.

- D58. Mombaerts, Gui to C. Curtis-Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: November 11, 1965.

Mombaerts sent a postcard to Curtis-Smith during his time at Northwestern to inquire about arrangements for a performance of *Wozzeck*. In addition to discussion of details, Mombaerts mentions a "hand accident" Curtis-Smith must have recently sustained.

- D59. Reeder, James M. to C. Curtis-Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: October 23, 1980.

Reeder, president of Michigan Piano Sales & Service, wrote this brief note to thank Curtis-Smith after the purchase of his restored Steinway piano. Curtis-Smith penned in a change of phone number for the company in November of 1995. Included with the letter were two copies of the same photo of the piano in question, prior to the restoration by Reeder.

- D60. Robbone, Joseph to C. Curtis-Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: January 22, 1975.

This letter, originally in Italian but with an English translation provided by someone at Western Michigan University, informs Curtis-Smith that his piece *Ordres* for piano, submitted under pseudonym Walden West, had been selected to receive a gold medal from the G.B. Viotti International Music Competition.

- D61. Schwartz, Elliott to C. Curtis-Smith and vice versa. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: January 30, 1978.

Bowdoin College advertised an opening for a composer, a faculty position spanning the 1978-1979 academic year. Curtis-Smith sent an application and required materials, but was declined; the school closed the pool early due to the high number of applicants.

- D62. Vosgerchian, Lusie to C. Curtis-Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: March 26, 1979.

Sadly, Vosgerchian writes this brief note to inform Curtis-Smith that he was not selected for a position in Theory-Composition at Harvard University.

- D63. Walraven, Chr. to "Walden." Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 15: February 27, 1974.

Curtis-Smith's piece *A Song of Degrees* was accepted by the International Gaudeamus Composers' Competition for performance during their Music Week in 1974. The letter is addressed to Walden as Curtis-Smith submitted under a pseudonym.

- D64. Zelder, Raymond E. to Mary F. Smith. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 48: October 17, 1979.

Zelder informs Mary that her son has been selected as a Distinguished Faculty Scholar for that year. He invites her to a reception and presentation taking place on October 22, 1979.

## E: Recordings

This section includes both commercially published and personal recordings (usually from the C. Curtis-Smith collection at the Western Michigan University Archives) when available.

- E1. Burge, David, David Chaitkin, C. Curtis-Smith, Andrew Frank, and Joe Hudson. *New Piano Music*. David Burge, piano; Lois Svard Burge, piano. CRI SD 345, 1976, LP.

Among the five compositions represented on this recording is Curtis-Smith's *Rhapsodies*. Curtis-Smith received positive reviews of the piece in no small part due to the existence of this recording and of Burge's regular performance of *Rhapsodies*.

- E2. Chihara, Paul and C. Curtis-Smith. *American Contemporary: Chihara and Curtis-Smith*. Chorus of the New England Conservatory conducted by Lorna Cooke deVaron. Men's Glee Club of the University of California at Los Angeles conducted by Don Weiss. William Albright, organ. CRI SD 409, 1979, LP.

William Albright performs Curtis-Smith's *Masquerades* on this CRI recording. All seven movements are represented. The recording took place at St. Mark's Cathedral in Seattle, on their D. A. Flentrop organ.

- E3. Curtis-Smith, C. *A Farewell... (Les Adieux)*. Fontana Chamber Arts. Recorded by John Stites in Shelbyville, MI, August 18, 2001, compact disc. Edited August 2007.

This recording includes Karl Pituch (horn), Benedict Goodfriend (violin), Seughee Lee (violin), Christine Rutledge (viola), Karen Buranskas (cello), and Lori Sims (piano) on Curtis-Smith's *A Farewell... (Les Adieux)*. All four movements are represented for a total of 22:21.

- E4. Curtis-Smith, C. *The Music of C. Curtis-Smith: Concerto for Left Hand and Orchestra*. Leon Fleisher, piano, with the American Composers Orchestra conducted by Dennis Russell Davies. Recorded March 30, 1995, compact disc.

Fleisher and the ACO recorded this piece at Carnegie Hall in 1995; the three movements span just over half an hour.

- E5. Curtis-Smith, C. *Concerto for violin, piano, and strings*. Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, Ralf Gothoni, conductor and piano, and Elina Vahala, violin. Recorded by John Stites, Arcadia Recording, May 1, 2006, compact disc.

This recording was taken at Dalton Center Recital Hall in 2006 as part of the Irving S. Gilmore International Keyboard Festival. Ralf Gothoni conducts from the keyboard when necessary. All four movements are represented in a total recording of 31:42.

- E6. Curtis-Smith, C. *Ensembles/Solos*. University of Michigan Contemporary Directions

Ensemble. Personal recording, April 1977, 1/2 track reel-to-reel tape.

Homemade recording on reel-to-reel tape, 7 1/2 ips 1/2 track.

- E7. Curtis-Smith, C. *Gold Are My Flowers; A Civil War Song Cycle*. Carmen Pelton, soprano, Jan Opalach, baritone, Renata Artman Knific, violin, Karen Buranskas, cello, Tom Knific, double bass, Christine M. Smith, flute, Bradley Wong, clarinet, Scott Thornburg, trumpet, Judy Moonert, percussion, Matthew Ardizzone, guitar, Silvia Roederer, piano, conducted by Joe Miller; Mary Bonhag, soprano and C. Curtis-Smith, piano. Albany Records TROY 1278, 2011, compact disc.

The liner notes to this recording include brief bios of Curtis-Smith as well as all performers, full text for both pieces, and program notes. Acknowledgements cite support for *Gold Are My Flowers* as coming from a Faculty Research and Creative Activities Support Fund grant from Western Michigan University and from the Alice M. Ditson Fund at Columbia University.

- E8. Curtis-Smith, C. *The Merling Trio Performs Works by C. Curtis-Smith*. The Merling Trio; C. Curtis-Smith (piano); the Stuttgart Wind Quintet, conducted by Dennis Russell Davies. Albany Records TROY 148, 1994, compact disc.

The Merling Trio, as well as the Stuttgart Wind Quintet and Curtis-Smith himself, perform four of Curtis-Smith's pieces: *Second Piano Trio*, *Fantasy Pieces*, *Sweetgrass Trio*, and *Sextet for Piano and Winds*. Dennis Russell Davies conducts the Quintet on *Sextet*. On *Fantasy Pieces*, Curtis-Smith performs the piano part, while Renata Knific plays violin.

- E9. Curtis-Smith, C. *The Music of C. Curtis-Smith*. September 20, 2008, compact disc.

Recorded by, and at, Western Michigan University, this two-disc set contains a live recording of a concert consisting entirely of Curtis-Smith's music.

- E10. Curtis-Smith, C. *The Music of C. Curtis-Smith*. CD. September 26, 2012.

This recording was taken in Dalton Center Recital Hall at Western Michigan University from a concert given in honor of Curtis-Smith.

- E11. Curtis-Smith, C. *C. Curtis-Smith: Rhapsodies, For Gatsby*. C. Curtis-Smith, piano. Personal recording, n.d., compact disc.

This undated, self-burned CD contains two of Curtis-Smith's works; *Rhapsodies* and *For Gatsby*. The composer himself performs.

- E12. Curtis-Smith, C. *Twelve Etudes for Piano; The Great American Symphony (GAS!)*. C. Curtis-Smith, piano. Cologne West German Radio Symphony Orchestra directed by Dennis Russell Davies. Albany Records TR475, 2002, compact disc.

Curtis-Smith plays his own *Etudes* in this recording, while Dennis Russell Davies conducts the West German Radio Symphony on *GAS*. The two pieces comprise just over an hour of music.

- E13. Curtis-Smith, C. *Unisonics*. CD. Western Michigan University Archives, C. Curtis-Smith Collection, box 51. Personal recording, n.d., compact disc.

This home-burned CD is undated and the performers are unspecified. The only text available is “C. Curtis-Smith / Unisonics”.

- E14. Curtis-Smith, C. *C. Curtis-Smith: Violin Concerto (1998)*. Sergiu Luca, violin, with the Shepherd School Symphony Orchestra at Rice University conducted by Larry Rachleff and the ProMusica Chamber Orchestra conducted by Timothy Russell. Personal recording, 1999, compact disc.

Sergiu Luca plays the solo violin part with two ensembles; for movements 1-3, the Shepherd School Symphony Orchestra and movements 4-6 with the ProMusica Chamber Orchestra. The recordings, however, were made in reverse order; the ProMusica movements were recorded on March 7, 1999, while the Shepherd School recordings of movements 1-3 were taken on December 3, 1999.

- E15. Dlugoszewski, Lucia and C. Curtis-Smith. *Sonorous Explorations*. C. Curtis Smith, piano, Trent Kynaston, alto saxophone; Handbell Choir directed by C. Curtis-Smith. CRI SD 388. Recorded by Trent Kynaston in Kalamazoo, MI, 1978, LP.

This recording includes three pieces: Lucia Dlugoszewski’s *Tender Theater Flight Nageire* and Curtis-Smith’s *Unisonics* and *Music for Bells*. As with many CRI recordings, each composer supervised or participated in the recording of their piece(s); in this case, Curtis-Smith performed *Unisonics* with Trent Kynaston and conducted the performance of *Music for Bells*.

- E16. Giles, James, piano. *American Virtuoso*. Albany Records TROY 860, 2006, compact disc.

James Giles here performs and often premieres works by a variety of (mostly) American composers, including Curtis-Smith and William Bolcom’s collaborative piece *Collusions*. Giles notes that the use of the term “virtuoso” in the album’s title is intended to apply to the composers who stepped up to the challenge of writing for piano as well as the performer. However, Giles’s claim that all the pieces other than two of Thomas’s on the recording were written for him is somewhat overstated; *Collusions*, at least, was almost a joke project of the two composers for the majority of its development.

- E17. Lieurance, Barbara. *Barbara Lieurance*. Personal recording, 2012, DVD. Also available via YouTube.

Lieurance distributed this video recording with her professional portfolio; the disc



contains a video of her 2012 performance of *Rhapsodies* as well as several other contemporary solo piano pieces. The pianist is one of the piece's biggest proponents; Curtis-Smith kept a copy of her portfolio, which is now a part of the C. Curtis-Smith Collection at the Western Michigan University Archives.

- E18. Morris, Robert and C. Curtis-Smith. *Morris/Curtis-Smith- Hammers and Bows*. Gerald Fishbach, violin, and C. Curtis-Smith, William Albright, and Robert Morris, piano. CRI SD 346, 1975, compact disc.

In this Composers Recorded, Inc. recording, Curtis-Smith performs his *Five Sonorous Inventions* with violinist Gerald Fishbach, then a fellow faculty member at Western Michigan University. The fifteen minute piece takes up a little less than half the full span of the short CD, which focuses on non-standard techniques; electronics in Morris's piece and bowing in Curtis-Smith's. The composer provides thorough program notes in the CD liner.

- E19. Curtis-Smith, C, Michael Daughtery, Christopher Deane, Joel Harrison, and Bill Ryan. *Alternations*. Coalescence Percussion Duo: Judy Moonert and Greg Secor. CD Baby B01BIF9XHG, 2015, compact disc and mp3.

In *Alternations*, the Coalescence Percussion Duo performs works by a variety of composers, including Curtis-Smith. *More African Laughter* was written for the Duo for premiere at PASIC 2008, and the two movements were recorded in 2015 and dedicated to the memory of Curtis-Smith.

- E20. Stravinsky, Igor, composer. *Stravinski: The Rite of Spring*. Curtis-Smith, C., piano and Phyllis Rappeport, piano. Recorded Publications Company Z 80961-80962, recorded January 26, 1974, LP.

Curtis-Smith and Rappeport perform Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* in the four-hands piano reduction arranged by Curtis-Smith.

- E21. Tanenbaum, David, guitarist. *David Tanenbaum: Great American Guitar Solo*. Neuma 450-84, 1993, compact disc.

Tanenbaum's solo guitar album includes works by Marilyn Currier, William Bolcom, Shirish Korde, and Bryan Johanson, in addition to Curtis-Smith's titular *Great American Guitar Solo*. The guitarist categorizes the album as "first recordings of American music."

- E22. Takeda, Yoshimi, conductor. *Kalamazoo Symphony Live*. KSO 1985, 1985 or 1986, LP.

The Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Yoshimi Takeda, here performs a concert including the music of Dvorak, Haydn, Tchaikovsky, and Curtis-Smith. The performance of *Great American Symphony* confines itself to the fourth movement, "Dido's dance."

E23. Takeda, Yoshimi, conductor. *Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra: Takeda 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Collection*. Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, 1997, compact disc.

This collection of works includes one movement of Curtis-Smith's *Sinfonia Concertante*; movement two, "Ghosts (Rice Field at Phnom Penh)." The recording was taken on March 21, 1997.

E24. Various performers and composers. *The Composer-Performer*. CRI CR670, 1994, compact disc.

Dedicated to recordings of composers performing their own works, this CD includes Curtis-Smith on piano with Gerald Fischbach (violin), performing the second movement of *Five Sonorous Inventions*.

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APPENDIX A: LISTED AWARDS AND GRANTS

Year	Award
1962	Greater Spokane Music and Allied Arts Festival Award: Grand Prize
1964	Allied Arts Piano Competition Award
1965	National Federation of Music Clubs Competition
1972	Koussevitzky Prize, Tanglewood
1973	Faculty Research Grant, Western Michigan University
1974	National Endowment for the Arts Grant
1974	Faculty Research Grant, Western Michigan University
1974	International Gaudeamus Music Week/ ISCM Festival
1974	VII Concorso Internazionale de Composizione
1975	Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund Grant
1975	Gold Medal, Concorso Internazionale di Musica e Danze G. B. Viotti
1975	New York Composers Forum
1975	Faculty Research Grant, Western Michigan University
1976	Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund Grant
1976	Prix du Salabert
1976	Faculty Research Grant, Western Michigan University
1976	Indianapolis Symphony/ Indiana State University Contemporary Music Festival
1977	National Endowment for the Arts Grant
1977	Faculty Research Grant, Western Michigan University
1987	American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters Award
1978	ASCAP Standard Award
1978- 1979	John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship
1979	Distinguished Faculty Scholar Award, Western Michigan University
1979	ASCAP Standard Award
1979	Faculty Research Grant, Western Michigan University
1980	ASCAP Standard Award
1980	National Endowment for the Arts Grant
1981	Faculty Research Grant, Western Michigan University
1981	Michigan Council for the Arts Grant
1981	ASCAP Standard Award
1982	ASCAP Standard Award
1983	Faculty Research Grant, Western Michigan University
1983	ASCAP Standard Award
1984	Faculty Research Grant, Western Michigan University
1984	Michigan Council for the Arts Grant
1984	ASCAP Standard Award
1985	Faculty Research Grant, Western Michigan University

1985	ASCAP Standard Award
1986	Faculty Research Grant, Western Michigan University
1986	ASCAP Standard Award
1987	ASCAP Standard Award
1988	Faculty Research Grant, Western Michigan University
1988	ASCAP Standard Award
1989	ASCAP Standard Award
1990	Michigan Council for the Arts Grant
1990	ASCAP Standard Award
1991	Faculty Research Grant, Western Michigan University
1991	Distinguished Faculty Member Award, Michigan Association of Governing Boards
1991	ASCAP Standard Award
1992	Arts Foundation of Michigan Award
1992	ASCAP Standard Award
1993	ASCAP Standard Award
1994	Faculty Research Grant, Western Michigan University
1994	ASCAP Standard Award
1995	ASCAP Composers Award
1995	Arts Foundation of Michigan Award
1995	ASCAP Standard Award
1996	ASCAP Standard Award
1997	Faculty Research Grant, Western Michigan University
1997	ASCAP Standard Award
1998	ASCAP Standard Award
1999	ASCAP Standard Award
2000	ASCAP Standard Award
2001	Faculty Research Grant, Western Michigan University
2001	ASCAP Standard Award
2002	ASCAP Standard Award
2003	ASCAP Composers Award
2007	“Best Sheet Music: New Work” award for <i>13 Ways of Looking at the Goldberg</i> , International Piano Awards
2008	Certificate of Appreciation for 40 Years of Service, Western Michigan University

Sources:

C. Curtis-Smith Collection. Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo, MI.

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 Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami, May 2002.