

• Revised Edition •

Solo Piano

Liz Story

Volume One



New Age
Series

Edited by Milton Okun



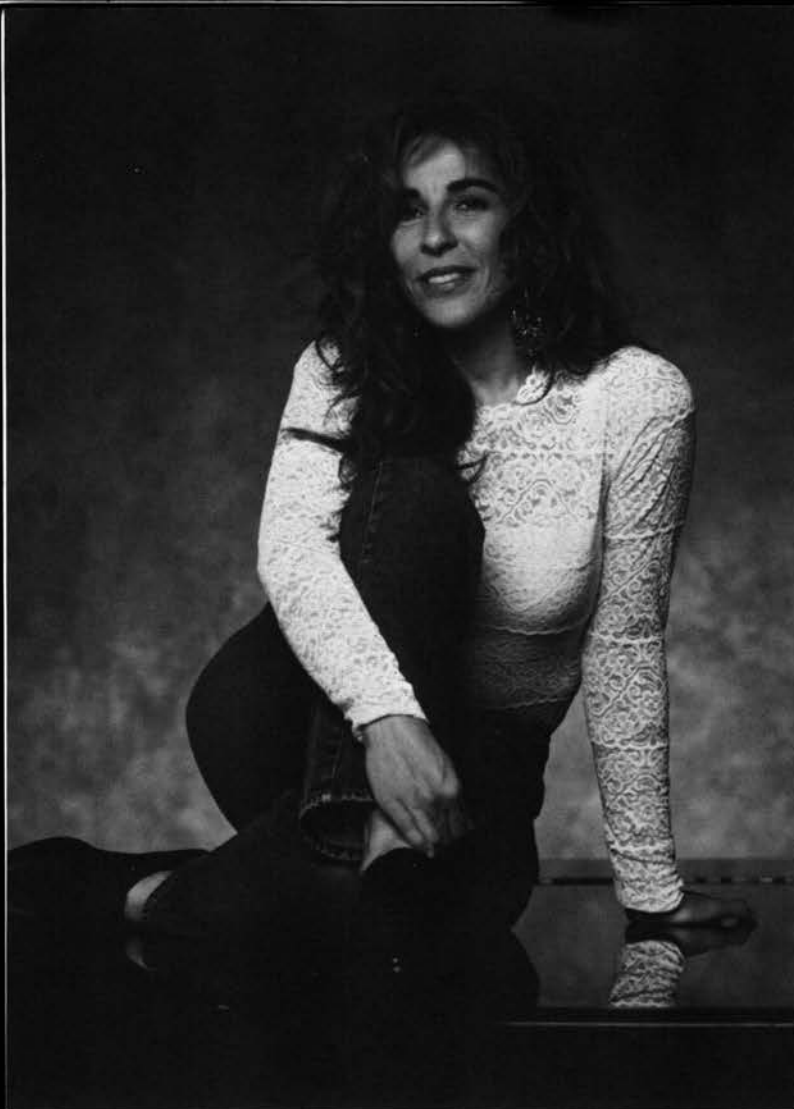
Cherry
Lane
Music

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Liz Story has established herself as one of the most distinctive composers and pianists of the new instrumental music that emerged in the 1980's. The

California native seemed destined to piano stardom when she mastered Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 11 at the age of eleven. But during her teens, Liz's interest in music had to compete with her passion for softball. Moreover, when her family moved to Germany during her high school years, she devoted herself to the study of languages, philosophy, and poetry.

After returning to the U.S., Liz reaffirmed her commitment to music. She studied at the Juilliard School of Music and had enrolled at Hunter College when a pivotal night spent listening to pianist Bill Evans at the Bottom Line in New York City affected her profoundly. Struck

by Evans' magical way with improvisation, Liz recalls, "It was suddenly clear how I was to study music." Upon Evans' recommendation, she became a student of Sanford Gold. Then, moving back to Southern California, she attended the Dick Grove Music Workshops in Studio City.

When she landed a gig playing solo piano in a French bistro, Liz underwent another conversion. The old upright at the restaurant had no place to hold her music, so she was forced to improvise every night. Her spontaneously conceived pieces developed into the compositions that found their way onto tape and into the hands of Windham Hill's Will Ackerman, who immediately signed Liz to record *Solid Colors*. Liz's career continued to take shape through such albums as *Unaccountable Effect* and two recordings for Novus/RCA, *Part of Fortune* and *Speechless*. Since her return to Windham Hill Records she has released two albums, *Escape of the Circus Ponies*, which she ranks as one of her favorites, and her most recent, *My Foolish Heart*, a collection of her arrangements of jazz standards, resulting from her collaboration with Dick Grove.

Ms. Story prefers the solitary artistic life, and currently lives in the geodesic dome she built atop a mountain in a remote, forested region of Arizona.

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Contents

6 *Devotion*

10 *Elephant Trainer*

22 *Frog Park*

26 *Hermes Dance*

39 *Myth America*

44 *Reconciliation*

54 *Solid Colors*

64 *Things With Wings*

74 *Welcome Home*



Reflections

Devotion

Both Buddhist and Christian texts describe the underlying essence of all the energies in the universe as unconditional love, and that the closest natural human experience of this love is witnessed in the love of mother for child, which is devotion. This piece is dedicated to my mother.

Elephant Trainer

This is a difficult piece to describe ... this requires imagining a kind of trick ... the kind of trick that the elephant trainer must use to approach such a large animal and expect it to behave in a certain way. Maybe I shouldn't call it a trick, but instead a special kind of knowledge that is a combination of adoration and respect for the elephant, along with a serious sense of fun. This title came because of the similarity I felt between how I could not seem, initially, to get all the different parts of the piece to "behave together," and what I imagined an elephant trainer goes through. There also seems to be direct correspondences between certain themes and the movement of an elephant ... an animal that I have always loved.

Frog Park

There was a park near my childhood home where we played frequently. A favorite activity was capturing very small frogs which appeared at certain times of the year, close to sprinklers throughout the park. We would name the frogs and take them home to create new frog houses and communities.

Hermes Dance

This piece was initially inspired by the sound of the ticking of an old German grandfather clock. I imagined Hermes, a magician trickster, enchanted momentarily by Chronos, the god of time, together forming a rhythmic juxtaposition. The way the left and right hands play through each other in the opening theme is a physical sensation of this interweaving.

Myth America

I have always loved this melody. This National Anthem of Great Britain has also, in the past, been used by several other countries (Austria, Russia, Sweden, Germany, Switzerland), and Beethoven wrote variations on it. The idea of the title came from an archaic definition of myth in the Oxford English Dictionary as "fabulous theologic broached by poets." ... The minor harmony I use reflects a personal sense of the tragedy of a patriotism that separates nations at a time when global unity is needed.



Reconciliation

I began this piece with an ostinato pattern for the left hand to accommodate a rhythmic shape in a tune by Mike Marshall and Darol Anger which had a bluegrass character. This effort proved a somewhat miserable failure but the initial pattern led to another which led yet again to another and finally the melody emerged and this piece came about. The title "Reconciliation" was the result of reconciling myself to the realization that usually first attempts at something are failures. However, continued attention and work will provide inspiration and yield results not imagined at the beginning.

Solid Colors

This is one of the very first pieces I ever titled. I had composed at least ten pieces at this point, none of which had titles. I used to refer to them by number. I felt the necessity of titles, but rarely, even now, do I ever conceive of a title before I write. As I began the search for titles, I would notice phrases, book titles, even advertisements, any words or combination of words that might trigger an association with the music. This is a process that is usually quite difficult for me. One day I saw an ad that read "patterns and solid colors," and inexplicably I felt the term "patterns and solid colors" referred quite directly to my sense of this piece. There was, and continues to be, this sense of D \flat major as somehow solid; and color, along with its physical characteristics, is what my first sense of music involves.

Things With Wings

When I play this piece at home, my bird (a yellow budgie) sometimes flies into the studio and lands near the piano. (This is the only piece that gets this reaction.) On one exceptional afternoon he landed on my right forearm as I played the return of the opening theme.

Welcome Home

The sense of this piece is literally a homecoming. It refers specifically to a return home after a long time on the road. The "road" is a kind of a day-to-day lifestyle of constant travel, concern about schedules, con-



nections, sound checks, etc. On the last day, when returning home, there is a wonderful release from all this ... so this piece has the feeling of this last day going home.

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