



**Steve Layton (1956- )    Different Light, Same Window    New Work, 2004**

This CD essentially collects works of mine created in 2004, that reference the “classical” tradition. (I also create works more heavily “pop”, as well as more purely electronic and electro-acoustic music. Sometimes I mix these all up, but this time those other pieces will appear later on their own CDs.)

The instruments run from the obvious to the imaginary; in reality none of them are real... But all of them are absolutely authentic. None of them are “filling in” for the real thing; they *are* the real thing, the sound I chose, each endowed with my head listening, my hand touching.

My titles almost always come after the composition, so they and their “program” aren't really essential for understanding the piece. They simply add another “color”, another way to approach each work.

Ninety-nine percent of the time I create what I perform, but once in a while an opportunity to realize another composer's work comes along. It's a great honor to get the chance to make someone else's piece come alive. In this case, my friend and fellow composer Jeff Harrington (b. 1955) gave me his blessing for a performance of stunning shiny beast of a piano epic, *DeltaBandResonator*. Thanks, Jeff.

-- Steve Layton / Seattle, January 2005

1. **Kolokola and Apaches** *solo piano*

Written while thinking that it was almost 100 years since Ravel wrote his *Miroirs*, with its “Vallé des cloches”. As a young composer, Ravel was part of a little renegade group of Parisian musicians, the *Apaches*, in love with things slightly “barbaric” and vividly exotic. One of those loves was for Mussorgsky and the Russian “Five” composers, whose ranks included Rimsky-Korsakov and Borodin. Rimsky-Korsakov was at that moment teaching a young Igor Stravinsky, who in only a few more years would live in Paris and become Ravel's friend. The giant bells Russia was famed for are called *Kolokola*. So all of these bells and composers are in my own piece -- wafting up through everything else that followed -- until they reached me.

2. **Why Apollinaire** *piano and orchestra*

Why Apollinaire? ...Why not? A short concerto for piano and orchestra, by turns deadly serious and manically happy, not afraid to wear its heart on its sleeve. Modern techniques and willful experiments over a classical core... So why *not* Apollinaire?

3. **The Temptation of the West** *solo piano*

A sharply-etched piano piece. The pull of the “other” is strong, but in the end just can't break to who and where we are.

4. **Almost the Periphery** *piano and orchestra*

Another kind of piano concerto, but with a very different feeling. The sense of being at the limit of a vast space, the slow writhe and breath. The orchestra incorporates slightly detuned groups of instruments, causing a curious throb and its own slow beat.

5. **Winter's Coming** *two pianos*

The two pianos are separated by some space, which gives the chance to explore a kind of polyphonic harmony. The sap in the tree has retreated, the leaves are gone and the sky is only half-light... But the core is still warmly radiant, dreaming of summer past and summer coming.

## 6. **Half Colors of Quarter-Things** *imaginary instruments*

The title is from the Wallace Stevens poem “The Motive for Metaphor”:

*You like it under the trees in autumn,  
Because everything is half dead.  
The wind moves like a cripple among the leaves  
And repeats words without meaning.*

*In the same way, you were happy in spring,  
With the half colors of quarter-things,  
The slightly brighter sky, the melting clouds,  
The single bird, the obscure moon --*

## 7. **Jeff Harrington: DeltaBandResonator (2003)** *solo piano*

Though long a resident of Brooklyn NY, Jeff Harrington has never been ashamed of his Mississippian roots. In a style that combines Beethoven's sense of form, counterpoint and drama with a minimalist, Terry Riley-ish riff and mantra, the real fuel that feeds the fire comes from Delta barrel-house piano. The form is classical, the energy “downtown”, the chorale is gospel, and the swagger is New Orleans. The motor never stops turning through the work's whole fifteen-minute stretch, and there's a real epic quality to the whole journey.

**All pieces © 2004 by Steve Layton (ASCAP)**

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**All pieces composed, performed and recorded by Steve Layton at NiwoSound Studio, Seattle.**

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