

# THE CONTEMPORARY VIRTUOSO

ROBERT STARRER

All my life I have striven to write music that engages the minds of those studying music, since the very future of music is in their hands.

I began playing the piano in early childhood and have played it ever since, professionally and for my own enjoyment. While I did not switch to composing as my chief activity until my mid-20s, I had enjoyed improvising ever since I started playing the piano. Luckily my mother, who insisted that I practice daily, could not tell the difference between the music I was supposed to play and the music I made up as I went along. So I got away with it, convinced that it was a sinful waste of time. It was not until much later, when I was in my early teens, that a piano teacher who heard me doodle asked, "What is this you are playing?" When I answered, "Oh,

nothing, just whatever comes to my mind," he told me to write it down and show it to him. He liked what he saw and then explained the difference between improvisation and composition to me.

These seven studies were written to address aspects of piano playing that have interested me for a long time. Included are studies for crossing hands, changing fingers while repeating notes, developing a singing tone and skipping without looking. Except where noted, suggested fingerings are editorial.

The pieces can be played independently or as a group, in any order desirable. Some are meant to sound quite brilliant, which is why I call this collection *The Contemporary Virtuoso*.

*Robert Starrer*

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Cover art: *Rhapsody*, 1965 by Hans Hofmann (American [German-born], 1880–1966)  
Oil on canvas (84 $\frac{1}{4}$ " X 60 $\frac{1}{2}$ " )

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Renate Hofmann, 1975 (1975.323)

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Estate of Renate S. Hofmann, New York

Cover design: Tanya Maiboroda  
Art direction: Ted Engelbart  
Music engraving: Nancy Butler

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Seven  
Pianistic  
Studies

for Katie Starer

I.

# CROSSING OVER

I have always liked to play music in which one hand crosses over the other. When I was a youngster, I wrote a piece for my father's birthday that had to be played from beginning to end with crossed hands. It did not occur to me then that it could have been played without any hand crossing at all.

ROBERT STARER  
(1996)

Fast and smooth (♩ = 120–126)

Measures 1-4 of the piece. The music is in 4/4 time. The right hand plays a series of eighth notes with fingerings 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2. The left hand plays a series of eighth notes with fingerings 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2. The piece is marked *p* (piano). The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Measures 5-8 of the piece. The right hand continues the eighth-note pattern with fingerings 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2. The left hand continues the eighth-note pattern with fingerings 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2. The piece is marked *p* (piano). The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Measures 9-12 of the piece. The right hand plays a series of eighth notes with fingerings 2, 1, 4, 1, 2, 1, 4, 1. The left hand plays a series of eighth notes with fingerings 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2. The piece is marked *p* (piano). The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Measures 13-16 of the piece. The right hand plays a series of eighth notes with fingerings 3, 2, 5, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1. The left hand plays a series of eighth notes with fingerings 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2. The piece is marked *mf* (mezzo-forte) in measure 13 and *p* (piano) in measure 14. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

# V. DOTS, DASHES AND SLURS

A dot above or below a note, as you know, means to play it staccato; a dash tells you to play it tenuto (separate but not short); slurs, of course, imply legato. A true virtuoso makes these three kinds of articulation distinctly different from each other.

ROBERT STARER

Sprightly, with a bounce (♩ = 104)