

Mp3 Dennis Ruff - Before The Law, Etc.



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The music on this CD is in the eclectic style of early 21st Century "classical" music, being primarily through-composed and improvisatory with suggestions of the Romantic Era. 14 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Virtual Orchestra, CLASSICAL: Contemporary Show all album songs: Before the Law, etc. Songs Details: As the title suggests, the opening work on this CD, my ninth for CDBaby, is an evocation of Franz Kafka's short parable, "Before the Law," a piece of writing that distills Kafka's mastery of the surreal. My music is also a portrait of sorts of Kafka himself, in that each of the six movements of the work is a free associative metamorphosis on K-A-F-K-A transcribed into musical notation. I have also incorporated in the CD cover an etching portrait I did in the mid-80s of Kafka's face superimposed on the form of a cockroach. The etching takes its title from his most famous short story, "The Metamorphosis," in which the narrator, Gregor, awakens one morning to find that he has been turned into a giant cockroach. The second work on the CD, Four "Antique" Dances for Solo Piano, is all about upbeat entertainment. I have placed Antique in quotes to signal that these are not dances, say, from Ancient Greece. Rather, two of the pieces are meant to suggest the early 20th Century music of the speakeasy and saloon. A third is in the style of an old Scottish reel. The fourth suggest the playful, jazz-inflected piano music of Ravel, Debussy and Satie. Sunset on Echo Park Lake is the most recent of several musical tributes I have made in recent years to one of the oldest of Los Angeles' urban parks, which is located very near my home in Elysian Heights. There is a musical "pun" embedded in the music, a mild joke that does not become apparent until near the end: The entire piece is a series of "liquid" variations on the Dies irae, a tune Rachmaninoff used so often that he might almost be said to have come to own it. The difference between his use of the tune and mine is that HE REALLY MEANT IT. I have given the Concerto for Guitar, Piano and Chamber Ensemble the subtitle, "Collages," to indicate the compositional technique I have used in place of sonata

form or thematic variations. Having come to composing by way of the plastic arts, I was interested in using in a musical composition the collage (Fr. a pasting or paper hanging) technique originated by French surrealist artists in the early 20th Century. Much as they took bits and scraps from various sources and pasted them together to create art, I took measures from the first movement of the Concerto and reoriented them, while varying tempos and introducing new bridge material throughout, to form the second and third movements. To my mind, this procedure has much the same unifying effect in the mind of the listener as more traditional compositional procedures.

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