

Mp3 Ray Carlson - Jane & Ray: B-4 & Beyond



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Full-spectrum acoustic instrumental piano, rhythmical and left-hand-driven. 14 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: New Age, BLUES: Piano Blues Details: Introduction I met Jane on May 9th, 2001, married her a year and two days later, and lost her October 25, 2005. All the adventure that took place within those four and a half years I could not begin to tell you. Nor could I fully describe in words the depth of our love or the intensity of our roller coaster ride together. I leave this task chiefly to the music. What words do follow sketch the outline of the last year of Jane's life. More recently, I have begun to hear lyrics while listening to these songs, popping out a word or phrase at a time. But most of the writing and singing of these lyrics would be best saved for another day. Today instead, I let the piano tell most of the story. I have described our first date as my "landing on Planet Jane." When one drives across the San Mateo Bridge toward Hayward the bridge resembles a roller coaster. The road appears to move up into the sky and then to drop off precipitously. Little did I know how real the metaphor would be. From the very moment we met, my life was never to be the same. One of Jane's favorite expressions was, "Whew! Another crisis narrowly averted!" To me, Jane was more than a wife, and our wedding vow to save the world, larger than life. Once I landed on Planet Jane, it became our combined planet, inhabited by birds, dogs, lizards, fish, cats, adolescents, and other creatures, and filled with adventure. Jane and I first corresponded online. Before our first date, I tempted fate. I wanted to know if Jane would be willing to meet at 11pm, by which time most people would be in bed for the night. I chided, "C'mon, Jane, where's your sense of adventure?!" She later told me that when she read this, she exclaimed out loud, "Oh, you have no idea!" Fast-forward two years, to my wife and (our) daughter driving me to Oregon in my own car to attend my niece's wedding, scheduled the next day. It was Friday evening, the same day I had been released from the hospital after being treated for pneumonia. The wedding would be early afternoon Saturday. As

Jessica poured cough syrup down my throat to keep me alive and (relatively) cough-free, Jane reiterated sarcastically to me, "C'mon, Ray, where's your sense of adventure?!" I could only laugh, hard! And of course cough. Jane made sarcasm more palatable to my tastes. Laughter was one of the 500 reasons why I married her. She tried to find something funny in everything in life, even in the bitter. Though her illness was indeed bitter, by the time of its arrival I had absorbed enough of her sense of humor to try to find something funny in it.

Suite: The B-4

1. Bobble My first recognition of this ironic humor is the opening song, "Bobble," which sets to music the Parkinsonian tremors with which Jane grappled during her illness, similar to the motions of one of those bobble-head toys. The irony is that whereas in life the ataxia slowed her down severely, the musical bobble of "G D G D G D F D" is what provides the energy to propel along this song. Although she said that she loved all the music she inspired, this piece was Jane's proclaimed favorite.
2. Bon Voyage This song was written to my friend Neemita as a birthday present. I began getting one or two measures of the music in my head each day of the ten-day Alaskan cruise that Jane and I took together with my mother. Jane began relapsing heavily during the cruise, but we managed to repeat our vows aboard the ship on June 21, 2005. If you listen carefully, during the second section of the tune, you can hear the song say its own name: "(Rest) Bon (hold) Voyage (1-2-3-4)" You should also be able to feel the ship rocking back and forth, the way it did the day we departed San Francisco. As soon as we returned, I began the frenzy of composing the soundtrack of our life together.
3. Bubba Begun a year earlier, and completed the summer of 2005, "Bubba" is the proverbial two-ton gorilla, a metaphor for karma, which will always show up, predictably if unexpectedly. So... "Fee fi fo fum, Better you run than to make-a- mad Bubba. You'd better mean well, or it's gonna' mean trubba'..." We would all do well to re-examine our lives with Bubba in view.
4. Burst of the Bubble Was last summer's Hurricane Katrina the whole bubble, or was it just the beginning of the burst? This piece tells the story of the burst of the bubble of our false sense of security, how it came about, and how no one paid attention until it was too late... "Nobody saw then the coming of trouble. No one could see it was the burst of the bubble." Mirroring this piece at home and providing its emotional intensity was my growing sense of frustration and despair around Jane's deteriorating condition. In retrospect, I see that I was sensing something personal as well as global.

Suite: Midway

5. Dark Island... Traditional Folk Tune Briefly, we take a break from the emotional intensity with this traditional Scottish folk tune I arranged. It speaks of a beautiful island of shadows far north. Away to the West's where I'm longing to be where the beauties of heaven unfold by

the sea, where the deep purple heather blooms fragrant and free on a hilltop high above the dark island

CHORUS Oh, isle of my childhood, I'm dreaming of thee as the steamer leaves Oban and passes Tiree. Soon I'll capture the magic that lingers for me when I'm back once more upon the dark island So gently the sea breeze that ripples the bay where the stream joins the ocean and young children play On the strand of pure silver, I'll welcome each day and I'll roam forever more the dark island. REPEAT CHORUS

To tread on the heather 'tis bathed in moonlight while the mid-summer dawning that follows the night. How I yearn for the cry of the seagull in flight as it circles high above the dark island. REPEAT CHORUS

6. Not Too Shabby By the time I started writing this piece, I began to realize the magic of the music I was composing. By this, the third song I composed that summer, I knew I was on a roll. Thus, the title is a reference to the revival of my musical self-esteem.

7. Step Crawl Meanwhile, as I was hitting my stride, Jane was losing hers and hitting the floor. Step Crawl is a description of her experience earlier in the year in physical therapy, and her attempt to begin it again after her relapse. Even before the relapse, it was hard work for her. After, it was nearly impossible. (The wal-ker) (step) (step). (The wal-ker) (step) (step). At one point you can hear the song bobble and fall, rest for a measure, then do the process all over again. When I finished this song, I expected that this album had been completed. When I told her the name of the song, she said, "Yeah, that about sums it up... step and crawl."

Suite: Through the Five Chinese Elements

8. As Though I Know, As Though I Don't Know (Fire) And then she died. Suddenly, on the morning of October 25, 2005, she stopped breathing, and the paramedics could not bring her back. I was in complete shock. By this time, I had begun to prepare myself for the possibility of a lifetime of chronic illness, but her death pulled the rug out from underneath the entire community that she herself had gathered together. Three days later, I felt her reach to me through a very strange but powerful spontaneous mystical experience. In it she showed me the tunnel between life and death, the great light at the end, and the stretched caricatures of those we have known in life on the sides of this cave. All of these are ultimately holographic wavelengths of the great-unified light. The color of the tunnel was a dark blue, laterally banded as though it had ribs. Were the lateral bands her ribs? It now occurs to me that Jane's rib cage was likely larger than my own. At the same time I felt the experience to be disconcerting and strange, I also found it to be eerily familiar and comforting. The name of this feeling, "as though I know, as though I don't know," became the song title, the words of which came to me as though from outside of my body. I felt as though either Jane stepped into my body or I stepped into hers, or both. This

piece was completed right before Halloween, about the time of her cremation. The fire is Jane's conveyed sense of liberation from the intense physical agony with which she had been afflicted.

9. A Life Meant For Me...Love, Jane (Water) I finished this song at 11pm on Thanksgiving night. My adopted son heard these words shortly after Jane's death and recognized them as coming from her spirit. Before I completed this song, I anticipated the title to be "A Life Meant For Me...Dear Jane." This song is both my love song to Jane, and her own reflection on a brief-but-exceptional lifetime. Jane built her life the same way she gathered her community, from the ground up. Ultimately, it was like a nest high in the trees, providing shelter to the vulnerable. This song has helped me cry the river of tears inside of me, left behind in the wake of her loss. Thus, it brought with it the element of water.

10. Bamboo (Wood) By the time that this song title came to me in late November, I realized that I was composing the five Chinese elements. This song is another one that says its name. The musical progression shows how just like a bamboo shoot, a single vision one day, watered by the rain, can become an entire forest the next. This song reveals how strongly I could suddenly feel the life force pouring through my own body. Certainly, although Jane is dead, I am still very much alive. Perhaps in retrospect, that last summer of borrowed time was for me to help her prepare to die, and for her to help me prepare to live.

11. Gathering of the Tribe (Earth) This song was begun years ago, but finished around the Winter Solstice of 2005. At that time, relatives were coming in from out of town. This song is dedicated to those who find community to be a higher state of living than isolation. The earth element of this tune comes to mind in the form of autumn leaves, which though stirred by the air, settle to the earth gently over time.

12. March Forth (Metal) by Ray Carlson and Doro Reeves Christmas Eve through Boxing Day (December 24-26, 2005) is the period during which my cousin Doro and I worked together on this Baroque piece. It might be appropriate to think of such metal as alloy, since this is a work of two distinctive composers. Metal is the element that provides purpose and direction to our lives. The song was written for my mother, Doro's aunt, whose birthday is March 4th. If you listen carefully to the last two measures, you can hear the beginning of "We Three Kings" woven subliminally into the alto part. And Beyond... ...

13. Mother Divine Hello?! Have we all forgotten something? Everyone who is religious sings an endless round of hymns (hims?) to God the Father, all the while ignoring the feminine state of our planet. Doesn't anyone remember God the Mother, from whom all life on earth is derived? If we are going to save the planet on which we live, we had better begin by treating her with reverence as a living, breathing, and divine being, whose body is the source of our own

living form... Moved as the wind is And deep as the sea, For already living are we, When wisdom that ripens as fruit on the vine Is kissed by the Mother Divine. CHORUS Mother of yours, Mother of mine, Essence that pours From Mother Divine Giver of forms, Living and free, River be born, of giving in me. Seeing our children in harmony live, our treasure to wish and to give. The refuge that harbors this vision sublime Is womb of the Mother Divine. REPEAT CHORUS TWICE 14. Planet Jane, Spaceship Ray (Epilogue) Since our story begins in the middle, it concludes at the beginning. The original tune on this album, Bobble, is incorporated into this busy finale to our story, showing the functionality of our relationship and our degree of activity before Jane became ill. Jane was stricken with a particular neuro-muscular condition that dissolved the myelin coating on the nerves, rendering her almost completely paralyzed about six weeks after she became ill, nine months before her death. She made an amazing recovery over a period of several months, only to relapse in the summer of 2005. Jane will forevermore be my chief planet, although I (often known to reside in the tops of the trees) am a cosmic traveler throughout the Universe. Jane and I had other symbols as well. The sun and moon, the cow, nun and wizard, cannabis leaf, peace sign, and rainbow flag were among the symbols of our being and our relationship. But this finale is a culminating metaphor for our relationship, which along with our vow to save the world together, exists in eternity. As a wedding present, one friend of ours gave us a Chinese roof tile, which represents longevity. In the confusion immediately after Jane's death, her picture was removed from the roof tile in order to display it in a more prominent location in the house. But next to the tile remained a photograph of the two of us taken shortly after we met. Our union lives forever. Therefore, if the music on this CD moves you, please know that it is the spirit of our relationship together which lives as long as I do. It comes back to life every time someone is moved by our story in music.

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