

**W. Jay Sydeman**

**Ceremonial**  
(c. 1992)

&

**The Little Balloon Man**  
(c. 1982)

for Solo Violin and Narrator



*Ceremonial:*

“In Alaska, anybody can do a marriage ceremony. My daughter was in Alaska... we went out in a kayak to this island and she performed the ceremony. I was with my violin, and I played this little ceremonial...”

*The Little Balloon Man:*

“In the ‘80s, I was interested in spoken word with music, particularly with instrumental music aside from piano. I was attracted to this poem, and I had a friend who played the flute... The first thing I wrote was the little balloon tune. Later, I added the introduction, and decided to use it for the violin. In some ways, the introduction is like stuff I wrote in the ‘60s, which is lots of different colors. The tune itself is just a straightforward simple tune.”

– W. Jay Sydeman, July 2010

**W. Jay Sydeman**’s life mirrors the breadth and variety of his music. Born in New York in 1928 and educated at Manhattan’s Mannes School of Music, he quickly became one of the most sought-after and honored composers of his generation, receiving commissions from such prestigious groups as the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Tanglewood Music Center, and the Boston Symphony, which premiered his orchestral work in memory of John F. Kennedy in 1966. “Sydeman uses a whole battery of far out techniques,” wrote the *New York Times*, “but he has an uncanny ability to throw in the whole avant-garde machinery as if it were the simplest, most normal way of making music in the world ... More than many of his colleagues, he seems to know what will sound well, and he works for some remarkably attractive, pure textures. His sounds seem to grow from a physical sense of exactly what material is right.”

In 1970, after a heady period that included awards from the National Institute of Arts and Letters, the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Library of Congress, Sydeman left New York – and composition – to begin a journey of personal and artistic exploration.

“Around 1980,” he has written, “I returned to composition – at first a large number of choral works which reconnected me to the source of all music – the human voice. Out of this new lyric impulse have evolved all of my works since that time – more romantic, more accessible. I create music for the musician.”

– Howard Hersh,  
Artistic Director of “Music Now”

Sydeman is part of a composers’ group in Nevada City annually producing the “Wet Ink Festival of New Music.” He now lives in Mendocino and hosts a bi-weekly program on KZYX, “The Mind of a Composer,” 10 am to noon on Mondays, introducing and commenting on contemporary music.

**Duration:** Ceremonial – circa 3:30  
Little Balloon Man – circa 2:15

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# Ceremonial

for Solo Violin and Narrator

W. Jay Sydeman  
(c. October 1992)  
Text by Ableza (?)

**Lento rubato** ♩ = c. 46

Violin

5

9

13

17

**A**

Narrator: *Great White Spirit ...* *... and All moves forward into the Light.*

*Great White Spirit of the open spaces  
The mountain tops and the quiet peaceful valleys  
Great White Spirit of Nature  
Of the heavens above the earth and of the waters beneath  
Great White Spirit of eternity, infinity  
We are enfolded within thy great Heart  
We rest our Heart upon thy Heart  
Great Father/Mother God  
We resign all into thy loving keeping  
Knowing that thou art Love  
and All moves forward into the Light.*

