

W. Jay Sydeman

Two Etudes
for Two Violins
(c. 1977)

In the early '70s I built a hut in the jungle of Kona side Hawaii ... the fast lane of New York being but a dim memory. I had taken up the violin in my very spare time and happened across another jungle-type violinist down the road (as it were). As we had nothing to play, I started writing duos. This went on for some time, so nightly duos became something of a ritual.

– W. Jay Sydeman, September 2015

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: Etude No. 1 – circa 0:45
Etude No. 2 (Canonic) – circa 0:45

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Edited and engraved by Rick Shinozaki (Albany, CA), consulting with the composer.

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Allegro ♩ = c. 126

1

mp light and delicate

mp light and delicate

4

8

A

12

16

20 B

mp

mp

24

28

32 C

mp

mp

36

pizz.

pizz.

Canonic

Allegro ♩ = c. 96

2

mf heavy détaché, always building

mf heavy détaché, always building

4

8

A

12

16

1. , 2.