

Each for Himself?

program note

This seven - movement work for solo piano is a study in contrasts: contrasts of mood, of technique, of musical language, of rhythm, of harmony, of *sound*. The title, ***Each for Himself?*** includes the provocative interrogation-mark to imply the very question: do these seven movements actually belong together, and if so, at what cost? Do they follow each other coherently, building up-- piece by piece-- a meaningful musical argument? Or are they better understood as isolated, self-contained miniature essays that are uncomfortably strung together on a temporal thread? The work keeps asking this question as the music progresses, starting with the very first piece, called ***The Five*** , in which two ideas--themselves contrasting--are interleaved with each other five times. Here are the names of the other movements--notice how they are connected and interwoven with each other:

Transcendental Blues
Machine Flats
Patches Purple
Returns
Rap Rag Red
The Five-Flat Machine's Return

The composer is encouraging you to contemplate the titles of the pieces--their meaning and their order--along with the music they represent. The question could even be raised: Do the titles go with the music at all? (!)

Of course, a different but equally meaningful way to listen to these pieces is to not worry about the titles at all, but to simply enjoy the rich variety of sounds, colors and moods, saving such questions for another time.

Each for Himself? was written in 1991 for pianist Frank Weinstock, who gave the first performances of the work in Cincinnati.