

A Delicious Musical Buffet: Tyler Kline's *Orchard*

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Ann DuHamel, DMA, NCTM

Grace Huang, DMA, NCTM

Agnieszka Zick, DMA

Link to listen: <https://www.tylerklinemusic.com/orchard-album>

In 2018, 27 pianists took part in a commissioning consortium for Tyler Kline's set of 50 piano miniatures, "Orchard." These delightfully appealing works wonderfully encapsulate a wide range of contemporary musical idioms, and are perfect to introduce students to modern music.

Of this set, Kline writes: "... This collection includes 50 pieces [that are] in one way or another inspired by botanical fruit. When composing each piece, I considered the various features of a particular fruit ... to arrive at compositional decisions. ... The music takes on my interpretation of a fruit's texture, shape, color, or flavor."

Recently released on Neuma Records, favorable reviews include: "we feast on a mostly tropical fruit buffet rich in taste and variety" (All About the Arts), "piquant ... a harvest of sounds and styles" (Jazz Weekly), "charming pieces ... which integrate the inner and outer world" (Sonograma), and "incredibly refreshing ... This is a project that is infinitely more stimulating (musically, educationally, intellectually, spiritually) than it looks at first glance" (Fanfare). Vital Weekly draws comparisons to teaching pieces of Bartók, Debussy, and Chick Corea.

This presentation, with three of the commissioning pianists—Ann DuHamel, Grace Huang, and Agnieszka Zick—and the composer himself, features discussion and performance of selected fruits from "Orchard," with focus on musical and pedagogical considerations for introducing these contemporary piano works to students. "Orchard" provides an imaginative and welcoming introduction to modern harmonies, rhythms, and concepts of form, as well as "user-friendly" extended techniques [harmonics, clusters, polyrhythms, plucking, muting].

The collection can be divided into five volumes, with volumes 1-4 in increasing level of difficulty (according to composer). Volume 5 consists entirely of pieces utilizing extended techniques.

Any piece that requires specific performance instructions, such as how to implement a certain technique or how to interpret an unusual notation, will be listed and explained with that piece.

For musical and technical details for EACH piece listed, go to: <http://z.umn.edu/orchardMTNA23>

Tyler Kline: “Orchard” (2018)

Volume 1: the easiest set

Avocado
Chayote squash
Cherry tomato
Grapefruit
Key lime
Lychee
Pawpaw
Pineapple
Sandcherry
Soursop
Watermelon

Volume 2:

Elderberry
Granny Smith
Granadilla
Guava
Juniper
Kiwi
Loquat
Peach
Persimmon
Rose hip
Sea grapes

Volume 3:

Blackberry
Black currant
Blood orange
Cloudberry
Datil
Durian
Honeybell tangelo
Honeydew melon
Tamarind
Vanilla bean
Yuzu

(Continued on next page)

Volume 4:

Bael
Carambola
Date
Fig
Horned melon
Lemon
Mangosteen
Nectarine
Pomegranate
Prickly pear
Tangerine

Volume 5: pieces utilizing extended techniques *

Buddha's hand
Ghost pepper
Okra
Pistachio
Poblano
Star anise

* Some extended techniques may not be possible depending on the way a particular piano is constructed (i.e., cross bars blocking strings, etc.). If the piano doesn't allow for particular techniques in one register, consult the composer to find a solution (usually up or down an octave is fine).

Excerpt from Tyler Kline's program notes:

I was born and raised in Kentucky, a mostly rural state (my hometown, as of the 2010 census, has just under 7,000 residents), and at any given point I was likely a mile within a farm. I even had music teachers who owned and operated family farms. After moving away, I became interested in the work of Kentucky writer Wendell Berry, and these writings have been very influential in leading me to consider composition in these ways. Not only that, but in researching my own ancestors, I have discovered that for many generations in the past they were farmers. Incorporating these values into my compositional thinking, and specifically creating music that is "about" soil, plant life, etc. is my way of honoring that legacy.

Orchard was born out of these considerations. An orchard is a plot of land used to plant and harvest fruit trees. This collection includes fifty pieces, ranging from 45 seconds to just over three minutes, all titled after, and, in one way or another, inspired by botanical fruit. When composing each piece, I considered the various features of a particular fruit in order to arrive at compositional decisions. So, in essence, the music takes on my interpretation of a fruit's texture, shape, color, or flavor - either in combination or focusing on just one of those elements.

To this end, given the brevity of each piece, I almost see these as "seeds" of what could be more long-form musical ideas. Each piece lasts long enough to express a specific idea - to "make a point" - and then it's over. There's no further development or variation, and no kind of extension into a formal pattern. My goal, then, is that when audiences listen to this music they will experience something similar to actually eating a fruit: the experience is brief, but satisfying.

Due to the number of individual pieces in *Orchard*, and the fact that in order to perform every piece would require devoting an entire recital or concert to just this music, pianists are encouraged to pick and choose the pieces that meet their programming needs and order them however they'd like. The prospect of this is truly exciting to me as a composer, because it means that there will inevitably be combinations put together by performers that I would never have imagined. Plus, I believe ordering the pieces in various ways will put the music in different contexts, creating a unique experience each time a pianist performs the music.

Questions or Comments? Contact us:

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