

**Bruce
Adolphe's**

Piano

as heard on APM's
Performance Today

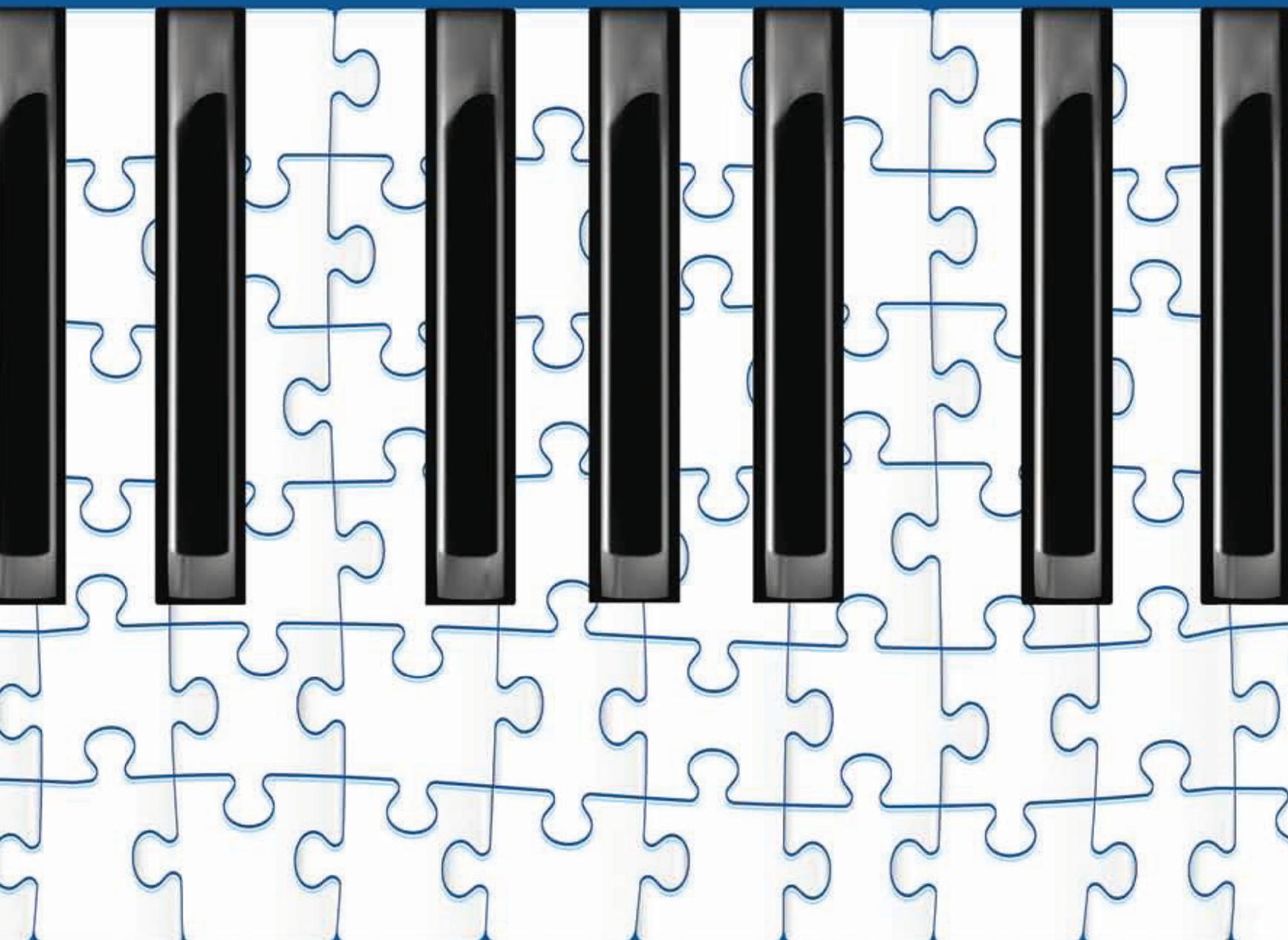
Puzzlers

FAMOUS TUNES

by Gershwin, Berlin, Arlen, Porter,
Rodgers, Fats Waller, Lennon & McCartney,
and many others!

DISGUISED IN THE STYLES

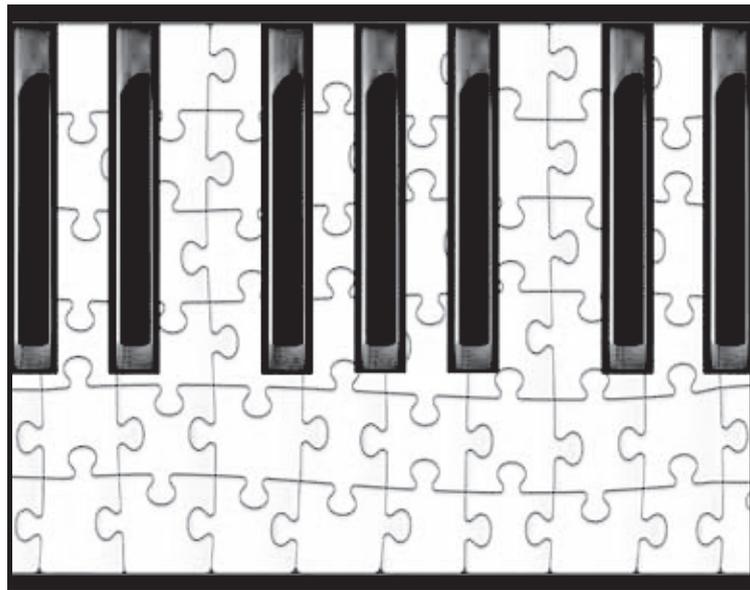
of Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms,
Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Bizet, Janáček, Debussy, Ravel,
Rachmaninoff, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Bartók, and Copland!



Introduction by Fred Child
host of American Public Media's *Performance Today*



**Bruce
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Puzzlers**



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Bruce Adolphe's Piano Puzzlers

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April 17, 2002. At the very beginning of that day's broadcast of Performance Today, I intoned these fateful words: "Today, we'll introduce a new weekly feature. 'Keyboard Conundrums' with compositional quizmaster Bruce Adolphe testing the musical acumen of one of our listeners. Play along at home, and feel free to shout out the answers!"

Bruce had popped in to the PT studios for an entirely different interview, but our show's editor at the time, Anya Grundmann, spotted some music poking out of his shoulder bag. Her innocent "what's that?" led to that one and only "Keyboard Conundrum," Bruce's musical mash-up of Gershwin's "Summer Time" and "Für Elise" by Ludwig van Beethoven.

We thought we might play with a few alliterative titles, and the next week we called it the "Piano Puzzler."

That was April 24, 2002.

Anya and I saw this as a nice 6-week feature on PT. It was a smart and (heaven forbid) fun way of talking about the remarkably distinct "voices" of the great composers. And a nice once-a-week change in the texture of the show: some off-the-cuff banter, a few of Bruce's inevitable puns, a little (heaven forbid) humor and even spontaneity in a daily classical music broadcast. As we neared the end of that initial batch, Bruce opined that he might be able to come up with another half dozen.

Did I mention that that was in 2002?

Since then, Bruce has written about 400 Keyboard Conundrums, pardon me, Piano Puzzlers. Each is a tasty bite-size musical morsel, anywhere from 45 seconds to about 3 minutes, but...ponder for a moment: taken together, the complete collection of Piano Puzzlers is now about 13 hours worth of insightful, delightfully clever, cunningly educational, and sometimes laugh-out-loud funny musical wizardry. In terms of sheer length, Bruce's Puzzlers rival Wagner's *Ring Cycle*. And when was the last time Wotan made you shout, "How Much is That Doggie in the Window!?"

Piano Puzzlers are part of American Public Media's Performance Today every Wednesday, but they've taken on a life of their own beyond our broadcasts. Bruce has done Piano Puzzlers on stage at music festivals across the country. Bruce and I were invited to do Puzzlers for an august international audience of composers, musicians, pundits and arts administrators at a palace in Salzburg, Austria. (And yes, the 'composer' for the first one we chose was the hometown hero: Mozart.) After hearing and falling in love with Piano Puzzlers, the brass section of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra asked Bruce to write a "brass puzzler." (Bruce's "Santa and Isolde" weaves together 12 opera highlights and 11 popular winter holiday tunes in 8 minutes.)

In our first ten years of Puzzlers, our guests have included Susan Stamberg, Robert Siegel, Nina Totenberg, Peter Sagal...and hundreds of listeners from all across the country. Some professional musicians, quite a few amateur players, and every single caller an intelligent, curious, and brave soul. My favorite listener comment so far: "because of your puzzlers, I have been listening with more attention than ever before. I actually 'Whoop' when, after turning on the radio in the middle of a piece, I correctly guess a composer! This game is really changing my mental involvement with classical music. Who'd a' thunk?"

Thanks to Bruce Adolphe, we've all learned a thing or two about listening, and about musical thinking. And with this second volume of Piano Puzzler sheet music, pianists the world over can thunk these out on the keyboard.

Enjoy playing along at home, and feel free to shout out the answers!

FRED CHILD

the puzzler's

story

It was a dark and stormy afternoon, way back in my early teenage years, with friends huddled around the piano for warmth, when I first discovered that I could get laughs by improvising in the styles of such musical giants as Beethoven, Chopin, Bartók, and Stravinsky. This party trick needed a sophisticated audience, and my friends, destined for careers in music, got all the jokes.

A knack for noodling on what used to be the ivories – but are now the plastics – is a typical talent for composers. Early on, I focused my attention on composing, and reserved comic improvisations for after-dinner entertainment. Later, as a teacher, I discovered that humorous improvs could help make a musical point clear to a group of restless theory students.

Playing one tune in several styles is an effective way to teach harmony as well as other aspects of composing, and students can learn a great deal by trying their hand(s) at it themselves. However, it was not in the classroom, but in the pre-concert setting that the puzzlers started to come into their own, providing a way to communicate compositional ideas to a general audience without using daunting technical terms.

My lectures at The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center eventually became saturated with tunes recomposed in famous styles, and this whimsical approach to scholarship caught the attention of NPR producer Anya Grundmann. Anya and Performance Today host Fred Child cooked up the idea of the call-in game show format, with a style inspired by both Car Talk and Will Short's radio puzzles. The piano puzzlers soon became a regular feature of Performance Today. Three years later, Performance Today moved

to American Public Media in St. Paul, Minnesota. With this publication, the Piano Puzzler program celebrates 10 years on public radio.

In order to make the show both fun and musically compelling, it was necessary to go beyond improvisation to meticulous composing. After all, if I am going to play the piece two or three times for the contestant and the listening audience, it really should be exactly the same each time, to be fair. Some of the puzzlers use a composer's vocabulary without reference to a specific composition, others refer to a famous piece, and then there are puzzlers that fall into a category that I call "musical mergers". These merge a folk or pop tune with a work actually written by a famous composer. For example, Irving Berlin's song "Cheek to Cheek" is merged with the slow movement from Beethoven's *Pathétique* (Sonata No. 8 in C Minor, Opus 13). (Please don't call the show to tell us that cheek and *Pathétique* rhyme.) The first movement of the same Beethoven sonata is merged with Cole Porter's song "I Get a Kick Out of You." There are many such mergers in this volume.

If you are teacher, I trust you will find something in this volume to bring humor and insight into your classes. If you are a performer, please feel free to program a few puzzlers as encores, or as sorbet between the meat-and-potatoes repertoire. If you are a student, you might find puzzlers to be a quick and fun way to explore compositional styles. If you can't play the piano at all, thanks anyway for buying this!

BRUCE ADOLPHE

about bruce

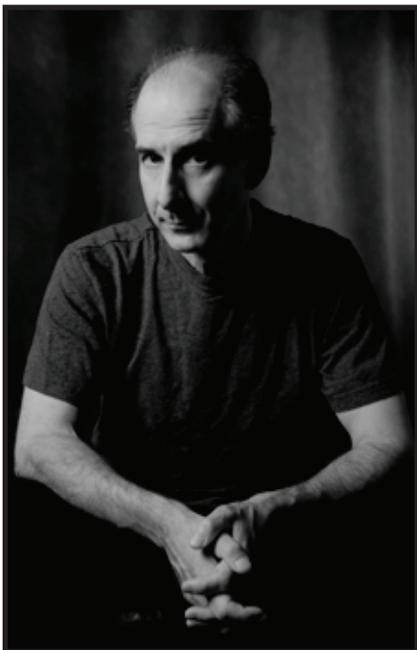


Photo by Barbara Lutisi.

Performance Today's comic keyboard quiz master and creator of the Piano Puzzlers, Bruce Adolphe actually spends most of his time writing music in his own style. Bruce's music has been performed worldwide by artists including Itzhak Perlman, Yo-Yo Ma, the Washington National Opera, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Metropolitan Opera Guild, the Chicago Chamber Musicians, the Brentano String Quartet, the Miami Quartet, the Currende Ensemble of Belgium, and many symphony orchestras. A recording

of his music on Naxos received a Grammy in 2005. Founder and director of the *Meet the Music!* family concerts at The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Bruce has also been their resident lecturer since 1992, as well as a commentator on *Live From Lincoln Center*, and a lecturer at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The author of three books on music, he has taught at Yale, Juilliard, and New York University. Bruce Adolphe was recently appointed composer-in-residence at the Brain and Creativity Institute in Los Angeles.

Hava Nagila

In the Style of Johann Sebastian Bach
Based on Prelude No. 2 from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book I

Hebrew Folk Song
"Piano Puzzler" by Bruce Adolphe

Allegro

Measures 1-2 of the piece. The music is in 4/4 time with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The tempo is marked **Allegro**. The first measure starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth notes and some accidentals, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

Measures 3-4. The right hand continues with a melodic line, and the left hand maintains the eighth-note accompaniment. The key signature remains three flats.

Measures 5-6. The right hand continues with a melodic line, and the left hand maintains the eighth-note accompaniment. The key signature remains three flats.

Measures 7-8. Measure 7 is marked **Adagio** and features a change in the right hand's texture with some chords and a slower feel. Measure 8 is marked **Allegro** and returns to the eighth-note accompaniment. The key signature remains three flats.

Measures 9-10. The right hand continues with a melodic line, and the left hand maintains the eighth-note accompaniment. The key signature remains three flats.

Measures 11-12. The right hand continues with a melodic line, and the left hand maintains the eighth-note accompaniment. The key signature remains three flats.

Cheek to Cheek

In the Style of Ludwig van Beethoven
Based on the Second Movement of Sonata for Piano, Op. 13 (*Pathétique*)

Music and Lyrics by IRVING BERLIN
"Piano Puzzler" by Bruce Adolphe

Heavenly adagio

p

5

6

9

13

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Bewitched, Bothered, and Bewildered

In the Style of Johannes Brahms
Based on Intermezzo in A Major, Op. 118, No. 2

Music by RICHARD RODGERS
Lyrics by LORENZ HART
"Piano Puzzler" by Bruce Adolphe

Andante teneramente

The musical score is written for piano in 3/4 time, A major key. It consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The melody in the treble clef is characterized by a mix of eighth and quarter notes, often with a dotted rhythm. The bass clef accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern, with triplets appearing in the later systems. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 6, 11, 16, and 21 indicated at the start of their respective systems.