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**Piano Sonata No. 4** *for solo piano* (2007) 14:00

- i. Memories 7:00
- ii. Voiceless Disconsolation 4:30
- iii. Reconciliation 2:20

**Program Notes:** This sonata is dedicated to my friend, Dale Elliott, after the tragic loss of his family. All the melodic and harmonic material is derived from a melody Dale composed while a student at the Juilliard School of Music.

The first movement is a collection of memories from his youth punctuated by the hours he spent practicing Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* at the piano. A loosely structured canon of ever-increasing complexity, this movement mimics the contrapuntal and toccata-like character of baroque keyboard music and demonstrates the gradual development of a virtuoso pianist. A descending arpeggio of minor seconds into the lowest register of the piano represents his apprehension preceding the multiple deaths of his family. Afterward, a brief moment of stasis and shock is occasionally interrupted by faint echoes of the opening material. These memories eventually disappear into the voiceless disconsolation of the second movement.

The second movement characterizes the abandonment, alienation, and confusion following a devastating loss. Amidst the lonely detachment, occasional flashes of anger build in frequency and intensity until a final explosive release replaces the isolation of the beginning with resolution and quiet contemplation.

The final movement signifies reconciliation. Moments of anger from the previous movement still linger behind continually oscillating chords. The initial clarity is increasingly confused by thick sustained passages in the extreme low register of the piano. At the lowest point, the texture clears to divide the increasing uncertainty of the beginning with the hopeful and positive ascending line of the second half. Like the excitement of an expectant child, flashes of hope intermittently break the undulating texture of rising chords until the mechanical limitations of the piano finally break the ascending line.

My friend Dale died in April of 2008, just three months after I had the privilege of presenting him with this dedication.

*Piano Sonata No. 4* was selected by adjudication for presentation at both the Society of Composers, Inc. Region IV Conference 2006 in Murfreesboro, TN and the National Conference 2008 in Atlanta, GA. It was also awarded second place in the GSU Society of Composers, Inc. Student Composition Contest in 2008 and will be recorded for "In With the New, Volume 4, Student Compositions 2009."